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ABSTRACT

Nine women whose lives have contributed to West Virginia history are profiled in these collected essays. These women have made significant contributions to history as: midwife, physician, journalist, photographer, educator, musician, civic activist, and social reformer. The stereotypical image of a powerless, barefooted, uneducated girl is proven to be distorted and false. The profiles instead provide alternative ways to view women who were in harmony with as well as in opposition to the role expectations of their society and times. These essays are not intended to commemorate the death of renowned historical subjects. Instead, they celebrate the lives and contributions of ordinary women by showing that greatness is not easily defined and that history is also the experiences of people in our own neighborhoods, many of whom are women. The nine women are: Susan Dew Hoff, Clara Cogar Bender, Frances Benjamin Johnston, Fannie Holroyd, and Catherine Bliss Enslow. Photographs of all nine women are included. (APG)

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MISSING CHAPTERS: WEST VIRGINIA WOMEN IN HISTORY

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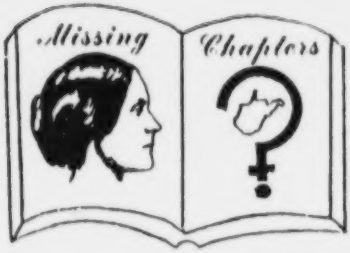

MISSING CHAPTERS: WEST VIRGINIA WOMEN IN HISTORY

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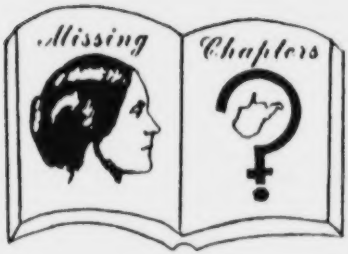

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Foreword

A myth surrounds West Virginia, trapping our women in a sterotype of mountain women everywhere: barefooted, uneducated girls and mamas at once eternally strong, yet powerless to control their own fate.

Missing Chapters: West Virginia Women in History is a study grounded in diligent research. It concerns some of the women of this area who have made significant contributions to history, as midwife and physician, journalist and photographer, educator and musician, civic activist and social reformer. It shows that the public image mentioned above is a distortion. It provides alternative ways to view women in harmony with as well as in opposition to role expectations of their society, of their time. Like the quilts of our heritage, it displays the possibility and beauty of lives made up of various roles.

This chapter adds a richness to our state history and allows the reader to come away feeling more sensitive about other missing chapters in history. It challenges the very basis of a culture described as quaint and patriarchal, providing more female models than we have known in our state history texts.

The Missing Chapters project reminds us that we have much to learn about the nature of human activity and of human relations. This chapter is not intended as a huge exhibition to commemorate the death of renowned historical subjects. Rather, it celebrates the life and contribution of ordinary women, showing that greatness is not easily defined and proving that history is composed of the experiences of people in our own neighborhoods, many of whom are women. The documentation of roles of relatively unrecognized women encourages us to tell about the lives that tell us more about ourselves.

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Jim Comstock and Harry Lynch initiated the publication of Missing Chapters in the West Virginia *Hillbilly* and assisted in publication.

Ken Sullivan provided support beyond that required as evaluator for the Humanities Foundation.

We also thank Charles Daugherty and Susan Kelly of the Humanities Foundation for their continuous support and encouragement.

Susan Dew Hoff

1

1 *Susan Dew Hoff*
(1842-1933)

[The following account is essentially a retelling of information gleaned from an interview conducted years ago by Stella C. Shetter. Family reminiscences are also woven into the biographical summary.]

Susan Matilda Dew was born November 24, 1842, in Hampshire County, Virginia, the daughter of Doctor William Henry Harrison Dew and Jane Davis Dew (a cousin of Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy). Descended from pioneer ancestry, Susan herself was a pioneer, the first woman to be licensed by examination as a physician by the West Virginia State Board of Examiners. She was an eighth generation descendant of Colonel Thomas Dew, an investor and subscriber to stock in the Virginia Company of London, who came to America to help colonize. He was Speaker of the House of Burgesses and advisor to the Governor, commissioned to discover new lands and accompany the Governor on important missions.

The first ancestor of Susan Hoff to be born in America was Andrew II, born in Virginia about 1650. William Dew, son of Andrew II, was born in 1711. He was a surveyor in Richmond County, Virginia. The progenitor of the West Virginia Dew line was Samuel, born in 1733, son of William. Samuel migrated to Hampshire County where his son, Samuel II, who was the father of W. H. H. Dew, was born in 1771. He is buried in West Milford with the family of his son who practiced medicine there for many years.

Doctor W. H. H. Dew was born in 1819. He first practiced medicine in Hampshire County, where Susan was born. The

following notice appeared in the *Clarksburg Register*, December 1859 issue:

> Drs. Dew and Davis of West Milford, Virginia, respectfully inform the public that they have associated themselves together for the practice of medicine in all its various branches. They hope, by strict attention to their profession, to merit public confidence.

From the time Susan was about eight years old, she spent much time in her father's office, watching with interest as he mended broken bones and bodies. She held instruments and bandages and ran errands for him. As she grew older her father frequently discussed medicine in general and his cases in particular, explaining the conditions and treatments. She often went on calls with him and listened intently as he talked with her and explained the cases to her. In later years she said, "I do not think any graduate of a medical school ever had as many lectures as I did." She also said, "I realize now that he was many, many years ahead of his time. He advocated the germ theory when some of the younger doctors he discussed it with didn't know what he was talking about."

Doctor Dew wanted Susan to be a doctor, but at that time medical colleges were not open to women. After Johns Hopkins opened its medical school to women in 1893, many other medical schools did likewise. In an article appearing in *Current History*, October 1927, "Women's Achievements Since the Franchise," feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman speculated, "Women in medicine would have shown more marked attainment but for the discrimination against them as interns in hospitals."

At the age of twenty-seven, Susan Dew married James Hoff on October 7, 1869. They had five children, one of whom died in childhood. While rearing her family, Susan continued to read her father's medical books and discuss medicine with him.

Doctor Dew died at the age of sixty-four on May 30, 1883. A short time afterward, Susan had a strange but realistic dream in which her father came to her, handed her his cane, medicine bag and high silk hat and said, "Susan, finish my work." The thought kept nagging her.

When she told her husband that she had decided to apply for permission to take the State Board of Health Examination, his surprised reply was, "Susan, you can't do it." At that time West Virginia had the Apprentice Law under which young men sometimes worked for several years in a doctor's office, studying until they felt competent to take the test. If they passed it satisfactorily, they were licensed to practice medicine. Susan's brother,

Doctor Rush Dew, tried to discourage the idea, suggesting that she devote her medical skill to mid-wifery. But Susan was a woman of strong determination and courage and was not dissuaded.

Susan began studying from her father's medical library to prepare for permission to take the State Board Examination. Members of her family remembered the times they had seen her holding her baby on one hip with a medical book in the other hand, studying; or perhaps with a book propped above the dish pan or the wash board studying as she went about her household tasks, doggedly pursuing her goal.

After having diligently studied until she felt prepared, Susan Hoff applied for permission to take the State Board Examination to certify as a physician under the Apprentice Law. In her application she explained that she had never gone to medical school, but her father, Doctor W. H. H. Dew, and her brother, Doctor Rush Dew, had been her preceptors. In due time, she received a reply giving her the date and time of the examination and advising her, "We will make no difference on account of sex or condition in life, but will carry out the law." This reply provoked her. She wrote back at once that unless unavoidably prevented she would be there and ended with, "I do not ask any favor on account of sex or condition in life and if I fail this time, I will try again."

Although her husband had originally tried to dissuade her from pursuing what he considered to be an unrealistic course, he was a very considerate and loving husband. As she said, "He was good. He was an indulgent father and the kindest husband — always ready and willing to help me in anything." Long before time for the examination, he had ceased expressing opposition to a thing that meant so much to her and for which she had worked so hard under difficult conditions. When the time came, he drove her to Clarksburg (a distance of approximately nine miles). There she boarded a train to Wheeling where the examination was held April 18 and 19, 1889. She traveled alone, exuberant with anticipation.

She was examined by both oral and written test for a day and a half. Five men took the test at the same time, one failed. Susan had the highest score of all. Doctor Myers, President of the Board, congratulated her on her success, saying, "You are the first and only woman who has ever come before this Board and you have passed one of the best examinations of anyone who has ever been before the Board." She told Doctor Myers it was not her intention to practice medicine, that she just wanted to prove to herself she could do it. Doctor Myers replied that it would be a crime for one

so well prepared and qualified as she not to use her ability to help people.

Returning to West Milford, she stopped at Salem to see her brother and his family. He was not aware that she had gone to Wheeling for the examination, so when she told him she was a doctor, he only laughed and said, "Doctor nothing." She soon convinced him that she was not joking. In the years that followed, he was very happy for her success and was always proud and cooperative.

When Susan returned to West Milford, unlike her father who gave notice of his beginning through the *Clarksburg Register*, Susan did not make any announcement of opening an office nor express a desire to practice. But with Susan's reputation as her father's assistant, she soon found herself practicing medicine.

For more than forty years Susan Hoff practiced medicine in West Milford and the surrounding countryside. In the early years she rode horseback. That dainty little woman, perched erect on her side saddle, was remembered as she went about the country ministering whenever and wherever she was called, regardless of the weather or of condition of the roads. Often she didn't know whether she would be paid or not, and only once did she ever sue for a medical bill. In that case she knew the man was financially able to pay.

For the first fifteen years her charge for an office call was one dollar. For house calls beyond a one-mile limit, her charge was one dollar plus one dollar a mile traveling expense. For delivering a baby she charged five dollars plus traveling expense. It was very rare that delivery of a baby cost as much as ten dollars. In her entire practice she never lost a mother in child birth nor a patient from typhoid fever; both of which had high mortality rates at that time.

The July 1928 edition of *The West Virginia Review* published an interview with Doctor Hoff, written by Stella C. Shetter, Vice President of State League of American Pen Women. In this article Dr. Hoff was asked how she was able to combine her profession with keeping house. Her reply, "I don't do housework or sewing. I give all my attention to my profession," was not quite true because she was very active in community affairs. Moreover, she was an avid reader, interested in political issues and a staunch supporter of woman suffrage. Her granddaughter, Eva Wolfe, noted, "Whenever any community situation needed fixing, Grandmother was called upon . . . and she usually was able to fix it."

Doctor Hoff was a believer in the goodness of human nature and scarcely knew the meaning of fear, but Mrs. Shetter reports the

one time she said she was so frightened she trembled. A man she had never seen before and whose looks she did not like, although she knew the family he had married into, came for her in the night to go with him to deliver a baby. After riding quite a distance over dangerous roads muddy with crusts of ice over the rutted surface, he finally led her through a field that led to a patch of woods. Suddenly she felt terror stricken. She was shaking so hard her foot would not stay in the stirrup. She thought, "Who is this man? Where is he taking me?" She soon learned her mistrust of the man was justified. He offered her a horse if the baby about to be born should not live. She added, "Doctors are often tempted but when people ask me to do certain things, I give them a lecture instead of medicine."

Doctor Hoff belonged to the State Medical Association and was named by the Governor as one of the delegates from West Virginia to the Convention for the Prevention of Tuberculosis held in Atlantic City in June of 1907. She remained for the American Medical Association Convention for she was avid to gain more information and knowledge.

She continued reading until cataracts almost blinded her. Then, in order not to be idle, she began to piece quilts because she could still distinguish colors enought to match the pieces. After the age of eighty-five she had an operation that restored her sight. So successful was the operation that she made two baby dresses of fine batiste, using one hundred thread for tatting trim. She said the dresses were for the first baby one of her grandchildren named for her, regardless of whether it was a girl or boy.

After her sight was restored, she broke her leg, but that did not stop this plucky lady. She refused to accept defeat and when nearly ninety years old she again walked. Relatives recall that one evening, her daughter and family, who lived nearly a quarter of a mile on a lane leading from Susan's house, were sitting on the porch when they saw a little light bobbing back and forth as it approached. It turned out to be Grandmother Hoff carrying a flash light as she walked the dark road to pay them a visit.

Dr. Susan Dew Hoff was a humanitarian who loved and served throughout her life. Her life echoed the words written by Edgar Guest and hung on a plaque over her bed:

"Let me live in a house by the side of the road and be a friend to man."

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Clara Cogar Bender.

2 *Clara Bender*
(1857-1942)

[In keeping with Appalachian oral tradition, this history originates in the stories told to me by the following kin and friends of Clara M. Bender: grandsons Glen Bender (Kyle's son) of Sutton and Homer and James Bender (Clyde's sons) of Frametown and Berry Fork respectively; nephew William (Bill) Dean (Maude Cogar Dean's son) of Chemical Town; daughter-in-law Goldie Bender (Homer's wife); and friends Lula K. Coombs and Dee Stump of Sutton.]

Down in the hollow where the Cowbells ring,
The Bulldogs bark and the Jaybirds sing.
He sung so hard his throat got dry,
You oughta' heard that Jaybird cry.

Oh! It ain't gonna' rain no more, no more,
It ain't gonna' rain no more . . .

A trio of young voices, pushed along by a cold January wind, brought a spark of life to the stiff naked trees and stoic mountains. Six small, bare feet left imprints in two inches of snow as three scarecrow-clad figures raced through protruding corn stubble inside a paling fence.

Inside the nearby cabin, a three-and-a-half-year-old sat on the foot of the big double bed. The unfamiliar activities in the adjoining room, which she saw through nearly worn out curtains, scared her. She started crying and her father came in and gave her his pocket-knife to play with. This pleased the small toddler. Soon she

grew accustomed to the strange sounds. However, she would occasionally peek through the wide slit in the limp curtains into where her mother lay in bed. As long as she could see her mother, she felt secure. But, she could not understand why every so often the old woman who was a guest in their home would climb upon the foot of her mother's bed and sit down.

The old clock on the wall slowly ticked the morning hours away. The young father paced the floor but kept an eye on the one-and-a-half-year-old sleeping at the head of the bed on which his older sister was playing. Eventually the little girl too got tired and fell asleep. Her father quietly walked to the bed and pulled a corner of the heavy comforter up and over her small body. Robert Lee Coombs stepped back into the room where his wife Lula was straining under advanced labor pains.

He continued to watch the busy, old midwife. Her movements were slow and awkward. Her short, round body swayed precariously above her two twisted feet. However, Coombs felt at ease and was grateful for her presence. It was not the first time he had witnessed the actions of her aged, but skillful hands. The coming child would be the sixth one that she had delivered for this backwoods family. She knew all the Coombs children, the three repeating her songs in the snow and the two asleep in the other room.

Clara M. Bender, known affectionately as "Aunt Clarie," spent sixty-five years as a courageous and indispensable midwife to hundreds of women throughout Braxton County and sections of surrounding counties. She also treated other patients with herbal medicines. Hers was a gift of knowledge and skill that she had acquired from her father, Thomas Cogar. Tom had been taught by his father, who had learned from his cousin Saul Carpenter. Saul had obtained this knowledge from the Hopewell Indians, who in the past had inhabited this region of West Virginia.

Clara was an early Christmas present for Thomas and Margaret Wines Cogar. She was born on December 16, 1857, just a couple years behind her brother Newt.

She was a beautiful healthy child. However, as she neared her first birthday, Tom and Margaret realized that there was something wrong with their daughter's feet. They were turned inward, and when her parents stood her up, she stood on the sides of her feet instead of the heels and soles. The Cogars had to face the unhappy fact that little Clara was club-footed. They knew that she would have a difficult time finding a husband, no matter how pretty she was. Young men in their rural and mountainous area would pass

her up for strong, able-bodied young girls to take as their wives. They would choose women who would be able to work alongside them in the field as well as bear their children and keep house.

Clara's early childhood was a busy but lonely one. In fifteen years she was presented with five new sisters and a second brother. Her sister Maude came first, then Jane, Judy, Vicy, her brother William and finally, Della. As soon as the other children got old enough to run and play outdoors, Clara was left sitting by herself.

On long winter days, the handicapped girl spent hours by a warm fire carding wool and running the spinning wheel for her mother. Her summer months were spent by her father's side on the front porch. She sat and watched him clean and prepare many herbs that were to go into the medicines he would need for his patients.

Clara was determined to walk. Even though it was a painful process and she wobbled perilously, she learned to walk on the sides of her twisted feet. She was then able to take over more of the housework, freeing the mother to spend more time in the garden and cornfields with her husband and older children.

However, unlike her brothers and sisters, she found her father's herbal medicine preparations fascinating. She spent all of her free time watching the process. She begged to go to the nearby forests and hillsides to help gather herbs. Occasionally, after her father saw that she had acquired the ability to climb some of the steep hills surrounding their home, he let her tag along. He found that many times she would spot an herb much more quickly that he. As she grew older, and when she could be spared from her household chores, he requested that she assist him in gathering and preparing the herbs.

Tom found his daughter to be an adept student. By the time she was sixteen, she could recognize forty-seven herbs and the exact amount of each that went into the making of his "Blood Medicine." This formula, if not made correctly, would cause instant death, but mixed properly, it was a proven cure for venereal diseases. Clara's three grandsons, Homer, James and Glen, and her nephew, William Dean, all living in Braxton County today, attest to the fact:

There was a man in Richwood, West Virginia, that was so badly taken with syphillis that the doctors had given up hope for him. Tom Cogar told the man that if he would let him, he could cure him. The man agreed to come and take his treatment. After three weeks of taking his Blood Medicine, the man was cured.

The nephew, now in his seventies, adds, "People afflicted with

venereal diseases came [from] as far away as Ohio to be treated by Tom Cogar. [And] Tom Cogar told me that he believed he could cure leprosy with his Blood Medicine." Moreover, Glen says, "Grandma used it on me to bring out the boils."

And four of these men swear that the medicine also cleanses and purifies the blood and was used for other diseases of the blood. But, they also swear, "It tasted awful and you thought you were going to die when you first took it. It tasted bitter, sweet, and sour all at the same time."

Tom Cogar taught his daughter many other herbal remedies. Among these were a poultice made from powdered raw hoptoads and placed around the patient's neck. It was used to cure "Quinsy," a swelling of the inside of the throat that choked the victim to death. "Grandma cured Jimmy Cutlip of Quinsy," says James Bender. Today, Quinsy is known as peritonsillar, abscess of the tonsils. Tea made from the flux weed cured "Flux," an excessive, abnormal discharge from the bowels and a disease that many died from before modern medicine. "Paul Perky ate green apples," recalls Homer Bender. "Grandma made him some tea from the flux weed and took it to his mother, Florence. But his mother was doctoring with new doctors, so she threw Grandma's tea out. The boy died."

Three different remedies were used for kidney ailments: a tea made from the purple blossoms of Square Weed, a tea from pine tree shoots, and pine rosin rolled into pill size and hardened. Grandson Homer still uses the tea from Square Weed blossom today for his kidney ailment.

Four other home remedies include a tea made from the blossoms of marigolds to alleviate Yellow Jaundice; a poultice made from Nine Bark Weed and corn meal, applied as hot as the patient could stand it to be, for boils; an unusual remedy for brain fever, a black chicken — and it had to be black — split open and positioned around the back of the patient's head. The head had to be placed in the center of the warm, raw meat. As the patient recovered, the insides of the chicken turned black; and finally, a tea made from the peach tree bark that had been scraped downward off the tree to stop vomiting and sick stomach. (If the bark were scraped upward off the tree, the patient would vomit the medicine back up.)

Clara, at age eighteen, was an attractive, but serious young woman. She was short and slender. Her full dark eyebrows curved in half-moon circles above searching, brown eyes. She kept her straight, dark brown hair parted in the middle and fashioned into a

bun at the back of her head. This made her nose appear more prominent on her small face, giving the false impression of a stern personality.

By her twentieth birthday, Tom and Margaret Cogar feared that Clara was destined to be an "Old Maid." Her younger sister, Maude, was already married to a young man by the name of Dink Dean. Jane, another sister, would soon be taking those steps with young Fred Sawyer. Clara's parents knew that their daughter was being rejected as unsuitable wife material. They knew the fears of the eligible young men's parents. These fears had been passed through many generations throughout these rural mountain communities. It was a common belief that all deformities and abnormalities that children were born with were either the result of unconfessed sin in the life of the parents or inherited. Clara's parents were not visibly deformed or crippled in any way, so that left an unanswered question which was the cause of such speculation throughout their neighborhood.

But the neighbors came to Clara for help, for she learned about midwifery by being present at family deliveries. By the time she was twenty-five, she had assisted her mother in the delivery of several nieces and nephews. The neighbors and friends of her family began to call upon her.

Moreover, she was helpful in another specific way. She was an expert at using hot moist cloths on and twisting the feet of the babies born club-footed to straighten the feet. "Grandma dedicated herself to helping those children born with clubbed feet," recalls Glen Bender. She said that if there had been a midwife with her mother when she was born, she would have straightened her foot. "I was born club-footed,"continued Glen, "and she straightened my feet." Actually, she was a Physical Therapist long before anyone knew what one was.

Tom Cogar worked part-time at Curtain's Lumber Mill, a half-mile from his home. He became close friends with a fellow-worker, James Bender. James was around sixty years old. He had receding brown hair that revealed a partially bald head. His deep set, brown eyes were divided by a large nose that was flanked on both sides by two high cheek bones. A streak of gray outlined the upper edges of his walrus mustache, giving the appearance of a hairy, upturned bowl over his upper lip.

James confided to Tom that his wife was dead and that his small son, Albert, was living with his parents in Richwood, West Virginia. Tom, sensing the loneliness within his friend, invited him to share many evening meals in his home. James found Tom's

home a friendly one. He was grateful for Margaret's warm suppers. A close bond began to grow between him and twenty-nine-year-old Clara. A year later they were married.

"Clara was a good wife," asserts her nephew, Bill Dean. "She could do anything. Her husband was a tall man with long arms. They stuck out of his coat sleeves way past his wrists. Clara knew how to knit, so she made him round, tube-like things that she called "pulse warmers" to wear in the wintertime.

"Grandma also knitted a tube that was something like a 'dickey' to keep his neck warm,"recalls Homer. "Dad said that when Grandpa had his neck band and pulse warmers on, he could work in zero weather and never even smell cold."

"Grandma was a hard worker," remembers Glen. "She did all of her own housework and worked alongside Grandpa in the cornfields. In fact, in 1888, she delivered her first son, Clyde, all by herself and then got out of bed and went to the cornfield and hoed corn. Clyde was Homer's dad and my uncle. But, ten years later, when Kyle, my dad, was born, Grandma was forty-one and she knew she was going to have some problems giving birth, so she called Old Doc Brown to help with the delivery."

This mountain midwife had to have a strong constitution as well as determination. She kept her home, family and garden cared for, yet when a man, stranger or not, appeared at her door, riding one horse and leading another, she knew that some woman was ready to give birth. She would drop everything, pack up and go, without any reservations as to who it was or where she had to go. Many times her husband and children would not see her for two to four weeks because of a mother's not properly counting or calculating the time of conception. Clara had to sit and wait, but it didn't seem to bother her.

"That's why all the women liked her," says a former patient. "She always took her time. She never got in a hurry. When she had to stay for extended periods of time, she would help the woman clean her house and help with the washings."

"Most of the time Grandma never got paid," says Homer. "Sometimes the family would give her a piece of meat or enough material to make her a dress. It took four yards to make her a dress." (In the forties, Clara Bender had gained quite a bit of weight, and back in those days dress goods were sold in thirty-six inch width.)

"That's one reason why the people would send for her," adds Homer's wife, Goldie. "When the people didn't have the money to pay a doctor, they'd just send for Grandma Bender, 'cause they

knowed she'd come whether she'd get paid or not. Most of the time she never got anything."

Around 1903, when Clara was forty-six, James Bender died leaving her alone with two boys to raise. Kyle was only five, but Clyde was fifteen, old enough to help take care of his little brother when his mother had to be gone. Her father was also still living and she depended on him and some of her sisters that lived close by.

By the time Clara Bender reached age fifty, she had been given the affectionate name of "Aunt Clarie." Many women throughout Braxton County would not have anyone else near them when it came time to give birth.

"After 'Aunt Clarie's' husband died and the boys were old enough to look after themselves," recalls one former patient, "she would stay with the mother, maybe a week or so, after she gave birth, especially if the baby was born with a problem — like the time she saved my brother's life."

"My mother was a fastidious housekeeper," continued the woman. "Just a few days before she was to give birth she washed her wooden floors. She had sloshed buckets of water over the floors. It was in the middle of winter and ice froze on the floors. She took a cold and when the baby came his bronchial tubes were full of congestion. Clara stayed and fed him castor oil until she got all the cold run out of him."

Aunt Clarie reached her seventieth birthday. Clyde was thirty-nine and Kyle twenty-nine; both were married. Clyde and his fast-growing family and had moved in with his mother, which was another reason why the elderly midwife took her time and stayed longer periods with her patients.

Aunt Clarie was a good woman, but a human being, and not always a saint. "As she neared her eighties, she became cantankerous and ill-tempered," says grandson's wife, Goldie Bender. "When I was just nine years old, I was watching my sister's baby on the front porch. The baby started to fall and I started after it, but Grandma Bender grabbed me and let the baby fall. I don't know why she did it, but my sister who was married to one of Homer's brothers, would not believe me then and I got a whipping. I never did forget that."

"She loved to eat meat," says Homer. "She loved chicken. She couldn't wait till they growed up. She'd catch them just after they put out their first feathers, when they were about half-grown, and kill them."

"One day Aunt Clarie stopped by her house on her way back from town," adds her nephew, Bill Dean. "And we were just sit-

ting down to eat. We asked her to have a bite with us. She smelled the meat that I was baking to bait my traps with and asked what smelled so good. I told her it was muskrat meat. When it got done, she asked if she could try a piece of it. I said, 'Sure.' She ate a piece of it and said it was the best meat that she had ever eaten. My wife and I tried it and it was good, so we ate muskrat after that."

"She smoked an old clay pipe, too," recalls Goldie.

"Yea, and she rubbed snuff," recalls Homer. "She grew her own smoking tobacco, too. She used a limb from the Nine Bark Bush for her pipestem, also."

"She spent weeks hunting for buried treasures," Homer interjects. "Down there close to Claude Plum's house, there is still a hole big enough to bury a car in, where she dug for gold."

"Grandma would get to feelin' sorry for herself in her old age," states James, "and she would say to me when I had to help her around: 'I bet you'll be glad when I'm gone.' I said, 'No, Grandma.' "

Aunt Clarie did have her pets among Clyde's children, and she was especially hard on granddaughter Kathleen. Kathleen was one to flirt with the boys and wear make-up. She sassed her Grandma. Aunt Clarie could not stand for her to be so disrespectful. It was unheard of, when she was a young girl, for girls to be so disobedient to her elders. She called Kathleen a "little heifer-hound" and a "bitch."

"Grandma always kept a switch hand," admits Homer, "but I was a sassy little devil myself."

"Grandma loved to fish, too," says James. "She'd spend a half-day on the river bank, fishing. Many times she'd climb out over the river on a big old waterbirch tree, and her crippled. She wasn't afraid of nothin."

"She couldn't read nor write till she was seventy," adds James. "She went to school and learned how. Then she got her a dream book. Every time she had a dream, she'd go get her dream book and look it up."

As Aunt Clarie reached her eighties, she (as well as all of the other midwives) was told by the newly arrived doctors in the county that she had to give up her work because she was not a licensed doctor. However, the women would not let her quit. The majority of the expectant mothers still preferred a woman at their birthing, instead of a strange man. Then also, there was the question of how the doctor was going to be paid.

"We had just moved close to Sutton and I went into labor before I was supposed to," relates one woman. "My husband got

concerned and went to one of the doctors in town. The doctor asked him if he had the five dollar fee. My husband told him that he didn't have the fee. The doctor told him that he had known the baby was coming nine months before and should have been prepared for it. My husband sent my father and an extra horse after Aunt Clarie. She got there in time to clean up the mess. The baby had already come."

Clara Bender celebrated her eightieth birthday on December 16, 1937. Less than a month later she was packing. She was needed and no matter what those doctors said, she would not say no to any woman that sent for her; this time especially, since the women that sent for her was one that she had delivered twenty-six years ago.

Robert Coombs sent his neighbor, Marco Morton, after Aunt Clarie. He came in his truck, but she would have felt more comfortable on a horse. However, she got in the truck and they began their treacherous journey. It was the second week in January. They had to drive over deep-rutted, icy roads that were pockmarked with mud holes. The round body of the elderly midwife rocked back and forth as the vehicle slid in and crawled out of the watery holes. The right side of her aged body felt bruised from being thrown against the metal door. He stiff, tired, old hands gripped the armrest to keep her from being slammed over against the young driver on her left. The truck labored up the final steep hill and came to a stop. A short distance away, past a paling fence, sat a log cabin. Spurts of bluish-white smoke emitted from the rusty stove pipe atop the shingled roof and filtered through the leafless trees.

The cabin door opened and closed behind Mr. Coombs and his ten-year-old son. They came quickly to Aunt Clarie's aid, as she stepped from the truck onto her cripped feet. The eldest son was given her cloth valise to carry. The young father held firmly onto the old woman's arm as she hobbled toward and into the three-room cabin.

Lula, with her misshapen body, welcomed the short, heavy-set woman with a warm and grateful hug. Her arrival pleased her. She had feared that the midwife would be gone, helping someone else. The young mother set about getting the evening meal. The five children were excited to have a visitor, especially one that was such a good entertainer.

Aunt Clarie sat in the old split-bottom rocker by the warmth of the coal stove with the smallest child on her lap. The other four sat transfixed on the double bed, listening to the funny songs rendered by their white-haired guest.

She sang clever verses and a steady refrain:

Oh! It ain't gonna' rain no more, no more,
It ain't gonna' rain no more.
How in the heck can you wash your neck,
When it ain't gonna rain no more.

It was the old midwife's fourth evening with the family. The three-room cabin began to feel crowded, and she had to share a double bed with the two youngest children. Her tired, aged bones had just "wallered" out a comfortable nest in the old feather-tick. She had fallen into a light sleep. A creaking of the rusty hinges on the door of the coal stove awakened her. Peeking through an opening in the old doorway curtains, she saw Mr. Coombs stoking the fire. Off came her "outing" nightgown and on went her faded calico dress. She stepped into the soft leather shoes that were made to fit her cripped feet. She made her way to where her patient lay. The young father had already put the teakettle on top of the stove for the needed hot water.

Aunt Clarie shooed the father out of the room. She then pulled the covers up from the foot of the bed, exposing the young mother's birthing passageway. She climbed upon the foot of the bed and sat with her legs extended outward. The examination revealed that the baby would not come until around noon the next day. She looked at the clock. It was eleven o'clock and she knew it was going to be a long night for her, as well as for the mother and father.

Five small children awakened to their mother's soft moaning and the smell of food. It was nine in the morning. The oldest boys dressed themselves while the father dressed his only daughter and smallest son. Carrying the toddler, he hurried the children into the warm kitchen.

The children lined up to wash their faces and hands in the cold water in the chipped porcelain washpan set on a side table covered with an age-old oil cloth. Then, one by one, they seated themselves on the two narrow benches on each side of the oblong table. The ten-year-old was handed the toddler to hold, while the father dished steaming oatmeal into each child's bowl. All of the children sensed something strange and different going on around them, and they were usually quite as they ate their breakfast. Robert Coombs absent mindedly fed his small son. Every few minutes he would get up and check on his wife's progress.

A loud groan from their mother startled the children. Their father told the three older boys that as soon as they finished their

breakfast they could go outside and play, but to make sure they dressed properly.

As the groans grew louder and came quicker, the father did not notice that his three sons slipped out the kitchen door barefooted. He gently laid the small boy, who had fallen asleep after his warm breakfast, on the bed in the room adjoining the kitchen and adjacent to the room where the mother lay in advanced labor. He placed the little girl at the foot of the bed where he could keep an eye on her and let her play with his closed pocket-knife.

Each time Mr. Coombs would pop his head into the room to check on his wife, the old midwife would send him back to the kitchen. He sat there, it seemed like hours, drinking cup after cup of Postum. He also kept his eye on the small ones nearby on the bed. The last time he had checked, the little girl had gotten tired of playing and gone to sleep. He covered her with the corner of the heavy comforter. He glanced out the bedroom window and saw three blond heads bobbing up and down as his sons ran around the garden, inside the paling fence. The fence hid their bare feet from their father. He had to smile as he heard them singing the songs that Aunt Clarie had been singing for them these past four days.

One last, loud groan came from the lips of the laboring mother. A few seconds later, a resounding slap, followed by a shrill cry, caused the father to knock over his drink. The two small children awakened from their slumber. A strange cry filtered through the mud-chinked cracks of the log cabin, stopped the unseasonal melody and stilled the reactions of the three larger boys.

They raced to the back of the cabin and in through the kitchen door. They heard the new sounds coming from their mother's room. They tiptoed softly through the bedroom where their little brother and sister sat wide-eyed, staring toward the adjacent bedroom. Three shy faces peeked around the door facing just in time to see their loveable guest lay their new baby sister beside their mother.

Clara M. Bender died of apoplexy on April 21, 1942. She had served her community as an Herbal Doctor and Midwife for sixty-five years of her eighty-five years on this earth. She was responsible for delivering more than seven hundred babies.

My life was touched by the courageous and dedicated Clara Cogar Bender. I count it a blessing to have known her. It was my three-and-a-half-year-old self that sat on the foot of that old double bed in the room adjacent to my mother's and witnessed Clara Bender at work.

FRANCES BENJAMIN JOHNSTON

3 *Frances Benjamin Johnston*
(1864-1852)

Born on January 15, 1864, in Grafton, West Virginia, Frances Benjamin Johnston transcended both regional and national notions about women's place in the 19th century to become a pioneer in American photography and photojournalism and a cursader with her camera for the historic preservation of the Old South. Through her active encouragement of women who wished to enter her chosen profession, she helped to transform women's "sphere." The photographic record she compiled in her more than fifty years as a working photographer continues to serve as a guide to the American past and to document her wide-ranging interests and achievements.

Johnston began taking photographs at a time when publishers were still relying on zinc line-cut engraving for illustrations and became one of the first American journalists to employ her own photographs to illustrate her articles. Her first photographically-illustrated by-line article, "Uncle Sam's Money," published in *Demorest's Family Magazine* (January, 1890), explained both the expensive, old line-cut and the cheap, new halftone process. The preference for engraving among the conservative journals such as *Scribner's, Harper's,* and the *Century* would retard the adoption of halftone reproduction until a price war was initiated by *McClure's* in 1893. But by this time, Johnston was well-established in her own photographic business and was working freelance or through George Grantham Bain, America's first newspaper agent, for scores of newspapers and periodicals.

In the mid-nineties, Johnston discontinued reporting to con-

centrate on portrait work and documentary photography. She also gained recognition rapidly as a pictorial photographer and was selected to be a member of the jury for the 1899 Philadelphia Photographic Society exhibit — the first all-photographer jury to judge a major photographic show. Johnston's service in this group placed her in the forefront of international developments in her art, since, in its composition, the jury defied established convention by failing to defer to painters and sculptors.[1]

In 1904, Johnston became an associate member of the Photo-Secession, a group of photographers led by Alfred Stieglitz in the fight to gain recognition for photography as a fine art. While her early painterly pieces, such as "A Gainesborough Girl," "The Critic," and "They Toil Not, Neither Do They Spin," are memorable studies, Johnston soon deserted the ideal world of *Beaux-Arts* photography for the real world of historic events and people. Long before Stieglitz redefined the direction of art photography from soft to sharp focus,[2] Johnston recognized the beauty and utility of sharply rendered black and white.

Despite her preference for black and white, Johnston began a brief flirtation with color in 1908, capturing the vibrant hues of the society gardens she photographed with the new color process. She had been introduced to color when she visited "Papa" Lumiere, the father of color photography, in August, 1905, on one of her many picture-taking expeditions abroad.[3] Always conscious of the need to make her passion for photography pay, she exchanged letters with the Lumieres concerning the American rights to their discovery. Although the outcome of this correspondence is unclear as are many of the details of Johnston's early business dealings, her abandonment of color was fortunate for the history of photography. A lengthy romance with color film, which professionals still regard as an unstable medium, would have jeopardized her important contribution to the emerging profession of photography.

Johnston was eager to experiment, but faithful to the techniques she found most effective. Thus, she continued to use Eikonogen as her developing agent long after her contemporaries had abandoned it, and she rejected many of the fads and fancy gadgets other photographers tried. Because she had a clear sense of her objectives, Johnston was never inclined to go along with the crowd. An early critic was struck by her individuality and noted aptly and prophetically that her work "is of no particular school or class [and] follows no traditions and no rules."[4]

During the first phase of Johnston's picture-taking career,

many rules would be discovered and broken. The independent streak that permitted her to find her own way as a photographer also made it possible for her to blaze a wide trail for other women to follow. And from the beginning of her career, Johnston identified with the aspirations of other women who defied convention, as she had, by entering a profession dominated by men.

Freed by talent, fierce energy, and social privilege from the constraints experienced by most of her female contemporaries, the peripatetic Johnston urged them to challenge these constraints and follow her lead. She recognized that photography offered women an opportunity to be self-sufficient and unconventional and noted that *she* had been inspired by a courageous women photographer's "dashing disregard of female conventions."[3] When she achieved a measure of success as a photographer, Johnston set herself up as a model for others, providing descriptions of the obstacles to a woman photographer's success along with detailed information concerning the cost, design, and management of a business such as her own. In a series of advertising sketches entitled, "Women Who Use Kodaks" (1890-91), sponsored by George Eastman, a family friend who had provided her with her first camera in 1899, Johnston attempted to promote women in the profession.

In March, 1893, *Cosmopolitan* featured an article on Johnston in a series on "Women Experts in Photography." As a result of this article, Johnston received queries from many women readers who wished to draw on her expertise. In "What A Woman Can Do With a Camera" (*The Ladies Home Journal*, September, 1897), Johnston responded to such queries, cautioning her women readers against apprenticeship to a professional and warning them that "even if a woman finds such an opportunity it is important that she learn to think for herself, and to keep her own ideas and individuality in her work."[4]

Although she had worked briefly under Thomas William Smillie, director of the Division of Photography at the Smithsonian Institution, Johnston grounded her photography in a thorough training in art. Upon graduation from Notre Dame Convent in Govanston, Maryland, in 1883, she had gone to Paris to study drawing and painting in the Academie Julien. In 1885, she returned to Washington, where her father had moved the family, and continued her art training as a founding member, teacher, officer, and student at the Art Students' League (later incorporated into the Corcoran Gallery). Elizabeth Sylvester, a fellow student at the League, gave Johnston the opportunity to supply the New York press with rough sketches and photographs for illustrations, thus

freeing her from her rigorous, but largely academic study of drawing and painting. Characteristically, Johnston tackled the challenges of her new vocation with exuberance, developing her first pictures in makeshift closet or bathroom darkrooms. Johnston observed:

> I entered upon my new vocation with the ignorance of photography that was as dense as my self confidence was unbounded. I cheerfully undertook things and strange to say was frequently successful, . . . simply because I did not know such things could not be done in photography.[7]

Johnston's assessment of the possibilities for success for other women in photography were optimistic; but her standards were high. She enumerated for her *Ladies' Home Journal* readers the qualities she thought were as essential to a professional woman photographer as the courage to break with convention. These included: "good common sense, unlimited patience to carry her through endless failures, equally unlimited tact, good taste, a quick eye, a talent for detail, and a genius for hard work."[8]

Johnston's own experience and the success of other women photographers at the turn of the century, such as Catharine Weed Ward, Jessie Tarbox Beals, Lillian Baynes Griffin, Edith H. Tracy, and Gertrude Kasebier,[9] substantiated Johnston's optimism. By 1900, when she was awarded a gold medal at the Third International Photographic Congress in Paris for her photographic series on Washington, D.C., public schools and Hampton Institute, Johnston would speak with conviction on the contributions of her female contemporaries in the United States.[10] Johnston's preliminary correspondence with the women she singled out for praise in her fluent French strengthened her identification with their interests.

The research Johnston completed for this speech at the Paris Congress, where she was the only woman delegate from the United States, prepared her to undertake a series of seven, one-page articles, entitled "The Foremost Women Photographers of America," which ran in *The Ladies' Home Journal* from May 1901 to January 1902. In brief narratives which accompanied selected work of each woman treated, Johnston emphasized the "ceaseless," "painstaking" effort required to achieve artistic effects, while implying that any woman of "good taste" might emulate her exemplary gallery of women photographers "without special training."[11]

Johnston, however, was unique among women photographers of the period by virtue of her early, independent start in the

business and her choice of unladylike subjects for her camera. Although other gifted women photographers had found work rendering sentimental shots of weddings, especially the prenuptial boudoir photographs which modesty forbade as a subject for the male photographer but which society decreed as an essential feature of the wedding album, Johnston refused to limit herself to the restricted range considered appropriate for the lady photographer.

In a studio built to her specifications behind her parents' house at 1332 V Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.,[12] Johnston had sittings under the largest skylight South of Philadelphia, entertained the "Push" (her circle of arty friends),[13] and presided at Wednesday evening studio receptions. Despite the studio's decor, which Johnston and her friends called Bohemian, Johnston's studio work was for the most part quite conventional. But the political and social connections she made through the women she photographed in her studio made it possible for her to venture far from home to take pictures of history in the making.

Among the famous women who came to Johnston's studio to pose was Frances Cleveland, the President's wife, who broke with precedent by bringing the wives of her husband's Cabinet to be photographed under Johnston's skylight in 1897.[14] Through her talent and determination and through such society connections, Johnston acted as "Court" photographer during the Cleveland, McKinley, and Roosevelt administrations. It was "an accepted convention" in official Washington that "if anything notable were to happen she would be present."[15]

Although the studio provided her with a regular income and a home base, Johnston spent much time on the road, leaving her mother in charge while she stalked photographic subjects. Mrs. Johnston's meticulous organization of Frances' business and personal correspondence during her extended trips to major international exhibitions of the period (Chicago in 1893, Paris in 1900, Buffalo in 1901, and St. Louis in 1904) reveals the support Frances received at home.

With her mother's active encouragement and help, Johnston committed herself to her own success and to advancing the cause of women in the profession of photography. Johnston was never a vocal advocate for women's rights, but she was a founding member of the Business Woman's Club of Washington, which she used to gain attention for the work of her "Pushy" friends[16] and to enhance her own interests and those of other women.

Johnston's attitudes toward women seem to have been egalitarian, for alongside the society portraits, such as those of

Mrs. Cleveland and the Cabinet wives, stand memorable studies of women workers in a shoe factory in 1895 and in a wooden box factory in 1910. Johnston's original prints of the photographs taken of factory women bear the names of the women written carefully in Johnston's handwriting on the back. In contrast to Johnston's pictures of these women, which illuminate the common concern and friendship that must have relieved to a degree the unpleasantness and monotony of their jobs, her pictures of the wives of the "great" men freeze her subjects for eternity in their separate, corsetted, constrained roles. As is almost always the case with the photographic record, however, the pictures speak volumes, the picture-taker is silent.

After the Cleveland sittings, the social elite began a stampede to Johnston's studio; her legacy includes 3,000 portraits of notable people. Among the most important of these are studies of Jacob Riis, Johnston's famous contemporary in documentary photography, and Susan B. Anthony, champion of equal rights for women. The Anthony series, commissioned in Anthony's eightieth year by the National American Woman Suffrage Association for the 1901 Susan B. Anthony Calendar, captures Anthony's indomitable spirit. Johnston's full front shot offers a rare view of the great suffrage leader who preferred to disguise her slightly crossed eyes by being photographed in profile. Johnston's artistic choice, however, renders the essential Anthony by showing her physical mass. This full front view demonstrates Johnston's characteristic concern with accuracy, a concern which caused Johnston to deplore portrait photographers who, in retouching negatives, "sandpaper all the character and individuality out of the faces of their sitters."[17]

With perhaps an instinctive sensitivity to the appropriateness of the frilly cuffs and lapels that connote class privilege Johnston allowed Anthony her lace. In a contrasting photograph of a European peasant woman of approximately Anthony's age, probably taken in 1905, Johnston pays tribute to another woman of differing circumstances. If these two portraits of old women were all that remained, Johnston would be considered a remarkable photographic artist.

Johnston's gift, however, was to capture such portraits not only in her studio but also under all kinds of adverse circumstances. In fact, the more adverse the circumstances, the more Johnston enjoyed herself. Like Diane Arbus, who observed that "photography was a license to go wherever I wanted and to do what I wanted to do,"[18] Johnston liked to pursue her subjects and catch them in

their own habitats. "Some of Johnston's best photographs were taken under conditions bordering on the fantastic at least for most young ladies of the period . . . it was 'Miss Frances' who climbed high into the scaffolding to photograph the Main Reading Room of the Library of Congress before the dome was installed!"[19] in 1896. In 1891, Johnston captured miners at work underground in the Kohinoor Mines in Shenandoah City, Pennsylvania, using magnesium powder flash which could have sparked an explosion. In 1902, she travelled in Ramer, Alabama, with a black man to photograph the achievements of Booker T. Washington's 'little Tuskegee' there. As a result of Johnston's thoughtless disregard for racist conventions in this episode, the school was broken up by white thugs. George Washington Carver, who had been on the train with Johnston, helped her escape to the next town, remarking, "She is the pluckiest woman I ever saw."[20]

On September 6, 1891, at the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, perched precariously and characteristically on a platform barely wide enough for her and her tripod, Johnston waited for the right moment and took what was the last photograph of William McKinley, killed by an assassin only seventeen minutes after Johnston photographed him delivering his last speech. Like many of Johnston's ostensibly straight treatments of important or self-important people, this famous portrait of McKinley seems today to subvert its subject. Through the truncated, profile shot of McKinley's paunch, Johnston created an unforgettable image which has been called, with unintentional aptness, McKinley's Buffalo pose.

The temptation to interpret such photographs is particularly strong because Johnston's papers frustrate attempts to deduce her political views or discover intimate details of her personal life. However, it was undoubtedly Johnston's carte blanche in Washington society that allowed her relentless camera its scope.

It was, therefore, Frances Johnston who photographed the Rough Riders on their return from Cuba in the summer of 1898. The photograph in which she immortalized Teddy Roosevelt was taken only fifteen minutes after his new, tailored uniform arrived from Brooks Brothers. The following summer, Johnston again caught Roosevelt, then Governor of New York, on the beach at Oyster Bay where he was swimming with his children. While Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Roosevelt had ordered George Dewey to prepare the fleet for hostilities with Spain. Johnston knew of Roosevelt's association with Dewey and used Roosevelt's note of introduction to gain permission to photograph the "hero" of

Manila Bay on his triumphal voyage home.

Johnston had been assigned to cover Dewey by George Grantham Bain, who recognized the saleability of such photographs. Bain warned Johnston that another photographer, J.C. Hemment, would attempt to scoop her, but promised that success would pay for her entire European trip. "Get Dewey, Dewey, Dewey!" he wrote from New York, July 18, 1899:

> Pose him and get his autograph on the picture if you can. Get him walking, riding, eating and drinking. Then get views of the "Olympia" from every quarter. Get all the officers singly and in little and big groups. Get every gun aboard individually. Get the mascots one by one. Get the men eating, playing, working. Make 150 pictures if you can. They'll start in at $100 and sell down to $5; but they'll all sell!!![21]

Johnston followed her orders implicitly, capturing Dewey and his men in almost every possible pose, singly and in groups; she even photographed Dewey with his dog Bob and with the ship canary which had lost its leg in the Battle. Despite less than ideal conditions, Johnston demonstrated her usual resourcefulness, loading her plate holders in the torpedo room of the vessel and, along with Hemment, printing all the photographs while on board. To the dismay of Bain, however, Johnston entrusted her negatives to Hemment who conveniently "forgot" to forward them with his own.

Johnston's reaction to Hemment's breach of ethics has been lost. Bain's reaction fairly sizzles on the pages of his reproachful letters to Johnston. In what must have been a disheartening experience for her as well as Bain, Johnston, however, emerged in final triumph. Although Hemment gained a nine-day edge with the newspapers, when Johnston's photographs finally turned up they were of much better and more enduring quality.

Johnston's coverage of the events of the Spanish-American war did not end with the unhappy, Hemment episode. Acting on commission for *Harper's Weekly,* which was in favor of annexation of Spanish colonial territory, Johnston arranged to photograph the ceremony in which four $5,000,000 drafts were paid to Spain for the Philippines as specified in the terms of the Treaty of Paris. Again, Johnston was foiled. This time the photographs which might have chronicled the transfer to the United States government of the imperial mantle of Spain were seized by a Secret Service detective who required Johnston to give him every print and plate she had made. These he sealed and took back to the department where they were destroyed[22] in the intersts

of "Manifest Destiny."

Whatever Johnston's reaction to this assault on her rights or whatever her reaction to this event many Americans lamented as a national disgrace,[23] it was lost with her photographs. Johnston weathered both the episode with Hemment and the episode with the Secret Service, however, and continued to cover the Washington scene she knew so well. When the Roosevelts entered the White House, Teddy attempted to stop photographers from violating the privacy of his family. But he was forced to capitulate to the demands of a public famished to see Alice, Teddy, Jr., Kermit, and Quentin. Frances Johnston was summoned and given almost exclusive rights to photograph the First Family.

Toward the close of the Roosevelt Administration, Johnston began shifting her business to New York where she had set up a temporary studio in partnership with Bain around 1905. From 1913 to 1917, she ran a second studio on Fifth Avenue in partnership with Mattie Edwards Hewitt, a divorced woman from St. Louis, whom she had probably met at the Buffalo Exposition in 1901 and who seems to have moved into the Johnston household, taking charge of the studio duties of developing and enlarging Johnston's photographs in 1907 or 1908.[24]

In the New York years, Johnston and Hewitt worked together on contracts to photograph public buildings for architectural firms and private residences and for wealthy employers such as J. Pierpont Morgan, John A. Astor, and Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney. Found among Johnston's clippings is an interview, entitled "They Photograph the Smart Set," in *Vanity Fair* (c. 1914), in which Johnston and Hewitt discuss adventures they had in securing their photographs. Apparently in unison, they told the interviewer, "We delight in difficult assignments — a new difficulty usually means a discovery of a new way to overcome it."[25]

Despite their long, intense and productive friendship, Johnston and Hewitt dissolved their partnership sometime in 1917. The cause for the breach is unclear, but whatever the cause, Hewitt's last letter to Johnston from the Everglades Inn in Palm Beach (undated) reveals a cooling in the ardor of her earlier letters to her "Dear Boss." Clearly, they no longer lived together, since Hewitt invites Johnston to lunch sometime "if you are still in N.Y. as you don't stay put for very long." This reference to Johnston's wanderlust may provide a clue to Hewitt's grievance, for in an earlier letter (undated), Hewitt asked Johnston, "Who ever said, *absence* makes the heart grow fonder?"[26]

In the years that followed the breach with Mattie Hewitt,

Johnston found work that accommodated her need for the excitement and variety of new places and people. She crossed the nation many times taking photographs of gardens and estates and giving lectures about landscape gardening illustrated with her own slides.

In 1927, she received the commission which led to her extensive survey of the architecture of the South when Mrs. Daniel Devore asked her to photograph everything of interest in Fredericksburg, Virginia. The 200 photographs Johnston took as a result of this commission became the nucleus of the pictorial archives of Early American architecture at the Library of Congress. A series of Carnegie Foundation Grants to fund Johnston's work followed from 1933 to 1940. During this final phase of her career, Johnston logged more than 150,000 miles in her chaffeur-driven, 1930 Buick and took more than 10,000 photographs that have served as invaluable guides to the historic restoration of Southern colonial architecture. Johnston believed (and with some justice) that this contribution to American history held greater significance for future generations of American than her contribution as "Court" photographer.

In an interview with Maud O'Bryan Ronstrom from the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* in 1947, Johnston, then 83 years old, talked about her achievements. Typically, she looked ahead to her completion of works in progress (such as the restoration of her house on Bourbon Street in the French Quarter and a book on "The Early Architecture of the Lower Mississippi Valley") rather than to her retirement. Johnston's sense of humor emerges in this interview in her description of the lengths to which she sometimes had gone to capture a photograph.

> "I won't take a picture unless the moon is right, to say nothing of the sunlight and shadow! Most of the time I have to be excruciatingly patient waiting for the light to get precisely right. Sometimes I have a tree cut down, have a stump removed, or a platform erected to get the proper perspective. I have shot pictures from on top of boxcars and loaded trucks. If I'm in a city street, I often call the police to hold up or detour traffic while I photograph a place.
>
> "When I photograph an interior," she grinned, "I usually ship the family out, lock the door and buckle down to business. One hostess caught me red-handed, moving out her furniture and removing dear Uncle Harry's mostrosity of a portrait from over a mantlepiece. She ordered me out of her house, saying under no conditions could I use my camera there. That was the only picture I ever burglarized. I took it

while she wasn't looking."[27]

Johnston may have affronted wealthy women occasionally with her insistence on taking the photograph she wanted to take, but her relationships with other women photographers were manifestly cordial. From about 1925 on, Johnston kept carbon copies of her letters, and while her intense interest in photography fills most of her letters, they enhance immeasurably our understanding of the strong-spirited woman who always took time to remember friends' and relatives' birthdays and to give love and support to other women in her profession.[28]

While the Johnston of the 1940s emerges much more clearly from study of her work and correspondence than the Johnston of the 1890s, the fair-haired, plucky, slip of a girl who challenged conventional notions about "true womanhood" at the turn of the century remains. At 83, Johnston was comfortable wearing old tennis shoes and joking with younger people, like Maud Ronstrom, about the significance of the four roses on her (Johnston's) floppy hat.[29]

The two antithetical poses in which she photographed herself at the age of thirty-two suggest that she may not always have been so comfortable with herself; the photograph of Johnston as a proper Victorian in furs, plumed hat, and gloves probably yields no more of the real Frances Johnston than the photograph of her as a Bohemian artist with beer stein, cigarette, exposed legs, and gallery of male conquests on the mantel above. To a degree, perhaps to a large degree, Johnston's discomfort with self-revelation may have been the result of the limited roles for women which this choice of poses suggests.[30]

Although the woman behind Johnston's camera eludes full understanding, Johnston enhanced the possibilities for women in her field, and contributed to our visual understanding of American history. At her death she left thousands of unforgettable photographs. In her more than fifty years as a photographer, Johnston took her camera where few women were permitted to go and made photographs which speak for themselves concerning the range of her vision and achievements.

NOTES

[1]Jerald C. Maddox of the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress. Quoted in Pete Daniel and Raymond Smock, *A Talent for Detail: The Photographs of Miss Frances Benjamin Johnston, 1889-1910* (New York: Harmony Books, 1974), p. 13. Robert S. Doyle of the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress, Leroy Bellamy of the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress, and Virginia Daiker formerly

of the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress provided me with additional information about Frances Benjamin Johnston. Because Manuscripts is now in the process of microfilming the vast Johnston Collection, my work was expedited. I wish to especially thank Robert S. Doyle for allowing me to use an index of the materials and to read the draft description of the Collection.

[3]Stieglitz began the process of redefinition in 1911.

[4]Johnston discusses this meeting in a long letter to her mother dated August 29, 1905.

[5]Quoted by Daniel and Smock, *A Talent*, p. 7. Johnston also claimed to have always judged exposure by guess.

[6]Frances Benjamin Johnston, "*NOTES:* For informal talk by Frances Benjamin Johnston at the Quota Club dinner," February 20th 1936, pp.1-2. Manuscript in the Frances Benjamin Johnston Collection, the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress. Johnston called her extraordinary mentor "Mrs. Blank."

[7]Frances Benjamin Johnston, "What A Woman Can Do With A Camera," p.6. Johnston was paid $300 for this article by *The Ladies' Home Journal*.

[8]Quoted by Susan Hunter, "The Art of Photography" A Visit to the Studio of Frances Benjamin Johnston, Holograph of Manuscript in the Frances Benjamin Johnston Collection, the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress, p.8.

[9]Johnston, "What A Woman Can Do With A Camera," p. 7.

[10]Johnston's correspondence reveals an evolving network of women interested in photography. Johnston worked at fostering the careers of able novices such as Landon Rives who sat for Johnston January 23, 1897, and to whom Johnston gave an introduction to Stieglitz's studio. The charting of the complex interrelationships of women in Johnston's circle remains a worthy endeavor for future researchers. Johnston's collection of articles on the efforts of early women photographers is especially helpful in illuminating the work of other women in the field.

[11]Johnston's correspondence with women photographers concerning the Paris Congress to be held July 23-28, 1900, includes the sample prints and the responses of thirty-five women photographers who answered her request for information regarding their work. Several of the women enclosed business cards or published articles about their work.

Johnston had a close relationship with Kasebier. The women referred work to each other and agreed on the opportunities for other women in the field. Johnston and Kasebier took divergent paths in creating memorable photographs, but they had a suppor-

tive and cooperative relationship over the years. Johnston paid tribute to Kasebier's work in her only contribution to *Camera Work* as well as in "The Foremost Women Photographers of America." Although they both were busy and missed connections as often as not, Johnston and Kasebier traveled together briefly during Johnston's summer in Europe in 1905. In an undated letter to Johsnton, Kasebier thanks Johnston for some clippings she had sent and writes: "What a shame we two women who feel so kindly toward each other cant [sic] make more fuss about it. My strength goes into my work and I suppose yours does too." (Autographed letter in the Frances Benjamin Johnston Collection, the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress.) Mary Ann Tighe calls attention to Kasebier's contributions to photography in the May, 1982 *American Photographer,* pp. 66-76.

"Frances Benjamin Johnston, "The Foremost Women Photographers of America," Part III, Frances and Mary Allen. Eastman Kodak was making even more encouraging promises in its advertisements which told the inexperienced, "You press the button, we do the rest," and "Anybody Can Use It." The marketing of the roll film camera in 1888 put picture-taking within reach for most Americans. In *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973), p. 65, Susan Sontag notes that Kodak also put signs at the entrance of many towns listing what to photograph.

"Ironically, the V Street studio of this woman who did so much for historic preservation is now a vacant lot.

"From Johnston's correspondence it seems that her closest friends among the members of the "Push" were Mills Thompson, who left to open a studio in New York in December of 1896, Frank Phister who committed suicide the same December, Alice and Laura Pugh, George Shaw, who served in the military in the Philippines, and LeRoy Topping. The origin and full composition of the "Push" remain to be researched. A forthcoming biography of Johnston by Anne E. Peterson to be published next year by David Godine should shed light on many questions which arise concerning Johnston's close friendships.

"Through her mother, Johnston was distantly related to Mrs. Cleveland. This relationship and Mr. Johnston's position as Headbookkeeper at the Treasury provided Johnston with entree into Washington society.

". Paul Vanderbilt, "Frances Benjamin Johnston, 1864-1952," *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* (November 1952), p. 225.

"From January 23 to February 4, 1896, The Business

Woman's Club exhibited posters of many of Johnston's friends. Johnston donated her entire collection for this exhibit.

[17]Frances Benjamin Johnston, "What A Woman Can Do With A Camera," p. 7.

[18]Quoted by Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, p. 41.

[19]John C. L. Andreassen, "Frances Banjamin Johnston and Her Views of Uncle Sam," *Louisiana History*, 1 (Winter 1960), 131. Andreassen cites a 15-page typescript biography by Paul Vanderbilt, Consultant in Iconography, Library of Congress. Although Johnston's papers reveal that she did photograph the Main Reading Room, Vanderbilt's typescript cannot be found, nor can the roll of 16 mm microfilm and the roll of 35 mm film which Andreassen footnotes.

[20]This episode is related in greater detail by Daniel and Smock in *A Talent For Detail*, p. 116.

[21]Autograph Letter, Frances Benjamin Johnston Collection, the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress. The highest price paid for a photograph during the period was $100 for Gertrude Kasebier's "The Manger."

[22]Undated typescript Syndicate Story for February 18, Frances Benjamin Johnston Collection, the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress.

[23]Mark Twain deplored American foreign adventures undertaken in the names of "Christianity" and "Civilization" in "To the Person Sitting in Darkness." William Dean Howells attacked the Spanish American War in "Editha." The Treaty of Paris, signed December 10, 1898, faced bitter opposition within and without Congress. A group of distinguished Americans, including former President Grover Cleveland and industrialist Andrew Carnegie, formed the Anti-Imperialist League. The league was organized to resist what the members saw as a departure from America's traditional conservatism in foreign policy and a violation of the nation's democratic and constitutional principle. The Treaty was passed by only two votes in the Senate.

[24]An impression of the passionate involvement of Hewitt with Johnston is inescapable. Johnston evidently rescued Hewitt from a loveless marriage with Mr. Hewitt, whom Mattie calls that "nice, little man." Because of the absence of Johnston's side of the correspondence, it is impossible to infer how she felt about Mattie's dependence on her.

[25]Published Interview, Frances Benjamin Johnston Collection, the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress.

[26]Autograph Letter, Frances Benjamin Johnston Collection,

the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress.

[17]Quoted by Maud O'Bryan Ronstrom, "60 Years With a Shadow Box," *The Times Picayune New Orleans States Magazine* (November 2, 1947), p. 8. Johnston's papers include correspondence with astrologers and this may suggest that she was serious in asserting that the moon had to be right for her to take a picture.

[18]Johnston was an ardent friend. In the days of the "Push," she loaned money freely and was considered the center of the group. Johnston's personal letters were primarily to women in her later years.

[19]Johnston is referring coyly to a brand of liquor. From her youth, she liked to drink. The letter to her mother dated August 19, 1905, describes the bottle laden table at the Lumieres! Daniel and Smock note in *A Talent for Detail* that Johnston's mock enlistment record filled out aboard the Olympia rated her 5 (excellent) in every category but "Sobriety." People who remember the red carpet Johnston received in the 1940s at the Library of Congress recall that, contrary to custom, the punch was spiked in her honor at a Division party.

[20]It is interesting to note that when Johnston photographed her "Pushy" friend, Mills Thompson, he put on a dozen disguises for the camera, donning the same hat, furs, and gloves Johnston had worn in the role of the proper Victorian.

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Fannie Cobb Carter

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4 *Fannie Cobb Carter*
(1872-1973)

In March of 1926, nine-year-old orphan Joseph Turner, one of three hundred children who resided at the nearby West Virginia (Colored) Orphans Home,[1] attended the opening ceremony for the State Industrial Home for Colored Girls in Huntington, West Virginia. The children, dressed in khaki prison-made uniforms, lined the walkway from the massive gate to the steps of the new building. An impressive motorcade stopped at the gate. Out of the fancy State cars stepped Mr. James F. Lakin, President of the Board of Control (which supervised all State institutions); Mr. J. H. Long, millionaire publisher of Huntington newspapers; Huntington Mayor Chapman, West Virginia Governor Howard M. Gore; and Mrs. Fannie Cobb Carter.

It was more than just sex and color that distinguished Mrs. Carter from the other dignitaries in the eyes of young Turner. As she passed the children on the way to the ribbon-cutting, she paused to put her hands on every child. Amidst an air of impatience, Mrs. Carter spoke softly to every child, aged two to twelve, all standing like little soldiers. She asked their names. Her greetings took at least a half an hour.

When at last she reached the steps to the Southern-style portico with its stately columns, she stopped in surprise.

"Mr. Lakin," she questioned, "what are all those bars doing on all those windows?"

"Well, Miss Fannie," he responded, "these are delinquent girls. We have to contain these girls. That's why all those bars are on the windows."

"Oh no, sir," she objected. Then she turned to a startled Governor Gore. "I thought you were appointing me as superintendent to take care of a young ladies' home. This is a prison, a penitentiary. You fooled me." The five-foot four-inch woman stamped her right foot. "This is a penitentiary. You need a warden. I won't go in this place. It's like having animals caged up. I'll not take charge of this place."

The officials were thrown into a mild panic. People started whispering to one another. No one knew what to do. The ribbon-cutting came to an abrupt halt.

To save the day, Mr. Long stepped forward. "Governor, I can take care of this. Miss Fannie does not want bars on the place. I'll have them off tomorrow." Governor Gore and Mr. Lakin nodded. Two days later the bars had been removed. The ribbon was cut; and Fannie Cobb Carter accepted her appointment as Superintendent at the Industrial Home.[2]

Her coming to the institution — the first of its kind in the state — changed the lives not only of the girls who resided there but also of many orphans in the home half a mile up the road. At the Industrial Home, the Golden Rule settled everything. Some of her girls had been in jail and were considered incorrigibles, but "she didn't throw the switch that triggered the master-lock for securing the dormitories."[3] She taught them respect for others, but more importantly, self respect. She told them they could learn everything. She and her matrons taught school, primarily home economics, and she arranged for each girl to have a bank account to learn habits of thrift.[4] She introduced them to the fine arts; she took them to plays. She arranged for bus transportation to Douglass High School; she provided clothing through various State agencies. She sent some of her girls on to West Virginia State College in Institute.[5] Moreover, it was because of her that many children left the nearby orphanage to go on to lead productive lives. In particular, she made certain the children had access to education, employment and the military, as was the case with now retired Sergeant Joseph Turner, who had been one of her favorite workers. When treatment at the Orphans' Home became so unbearable that girls fled to Miss Fannie for sanctuary, she refused to send them back. She would not deny anyone who came to her for help. During her decade at the Industrial Home, she saw that hundreds were educated.

Mrs. Carter removed bars for those children who could not tear them down themselves because there had been no one to teach them. Her goal was to prepare black children, as she herself had

been prepared, to function in the world community. She knew that education was the key.

Fannie C. Cobb was born September 30, 1872, in Charleston, West Virginia. Ten years prior to her birth and just prior to Statehood, the first school for black children, a "pay school," was established in Parkersburg by seven prominent colored men.[6] (It was merged with the free school system in 1867.) "The first Constitution of West Virginia, adopted in 1863, provided for the establishment of free schools; but made no reference to the colored youth of the State."[7] The Legislature passed an act in February of 1866 establishing colored schools in sub-districts containing thirty colored children between the ages of six and twenty-one. (The schools had to have average attendance of fifteen or be closed.)[8] In 1872, the year of Fannie Cobb's birth, the West Virginia Constitution was revised to provide "that white and colored persons should not be taught in the same school . . . [and] a law was enacted authorizing the State Superintendent of Free Schools to make arrangements with some school in the State for the normal training of colored teachers."[9]

Fannie's education began on the Ruffner farm where her mother and father, Margaret and Aaron Cobb, were servants for Joel and Diana Ruffner.[10] While her mother worked for six to twelve family members, seven days a week, for $1.50 a week, little Fannie had the advantage of having at least six live-in teachers, the Ruffner children.[11] Each one was responsible for teaching her a skill, such as sewing, arithmetic, and reading. The Ruffners also instilled in her their religious values. She was taught to believe in God and to be obedient. Although Mrs. Ruffner, whom she called "Grandma," never told her "Don't do that!" Fannie knew that she could not go beyond the Ruffner gate.[12] This was the only time in Fannie's life that she would allow herself to be restrained by other people's boundaries.

Her formal education began in the second grade at a black school on Quarrier Street above Dickinson. After Diana Ruffner died, Fannie went to live with her maternal grandmother, a former slave of the Dickinsons of Malden who then worked for the Charles Lewis family of Charleston. There she was taught by a governess with the Lewis children, and she continued her public schooling. It was also during this time that she became acquainted with famous educator Booker T. Washington, who was a frequent visitor in her grandmother's home on Brooks Street.

Upon completion of secondary education, Fannie passed the entrance examination for Storer College, the only black teacher

training school in the state. Money for her education was raised by her uncle, A. H. Irving, a graduate of Hampton Institute of Virginia and longtime friend of Booker T. Washington.[13] Fannie studied for two years at Storer College in Harper's Ferry and was graduated in 1891 with a Teacher's Training Certificate. After graduation, Fannie taught in schools in Charleston and the Upper Kanawha Valley and spent time in Malden, West Virginia, where she became affiliated with the African Zion Baptist Church, the oldest black church in the state. This connection reinforced her friendship with Booker T. Washington, his family and his teachers, Reverend Lewis Rice and William H. Davis. Mr. Davis was a great impetus in teaching Fannie effective secondary instruction methods.

In 1895, at age twenty-three, Fannie Cobb was appointed to the Kanawha County Public School System at a monthly salary of $42.[14] Her appointment caused a ruckus in the community. Somebody said she was too young. The newspaper said that the school board had "set schools back by putting children in charge of schools."[15] The complaint seemed to be that young persons such as Fannie Cobb had no experience.

It was during these early years that a man she had known during her childhood, Mr. George S. Laidley, played an important part in her career. He served as Superintendent of Charleston schools from 1878 to 1922 (with the exception of two years, 1881-1883).[16] At the protest meetings, Mr. Laidley asked the protestors to give her a chance.

She met the challenge, swore to uphold the laws of the country and state in performing her teaching duties, won an undisputed reputation as an outstanding instructor, but never could bring herself to teach her children to sing "America."[17]

Teaching and learning were always her priorities. While working in Kanawha County schools, she broadened her own education at a variety of institutions, spending summer terms at Oberlin College and Hampton Institute, two summer terms at both the University of Chicago and Ohio State University, five summer terms at Columbia University and a year at Knoxville College in Tennessee.

In 1908, State Superintendent Thomas C. Miller asked for her to be released from public schools to establish a Teacher's Training Department at West Virginia Colored Institute. It was Miller's feeling that Miss Cobb owed it to the state; however, Mr. Laidley did not agree and wanted her to remain in the public elementary schools, telling her, "So long as I'm here, for as long as I'm here, you have a friend in the court,"[18] Yet, in a subsequent conversa-

tion, Laidley released her from her contract. She was paid $700 a year plus room and board, the highest salary for any black teacher in the state.[19]

Fannie Cobb married Charleston Lawyer Emory R. Carter in 1911. They, and her mother, moved into their home in the South Hills area of Charleston. Fannie was staying on the Institute campus, commuting back and forth by train on weekends. Since Fannie and her husband spent so little time together during the school semesters, she always tried to do something special for him when she went home on weekends. One thing he liked, and one thing she thought she excelled in, was making tapioca pudding. She made it every weekend, by the gallon, so that he would have plenty all week. At last her mother told her the truth. Emory had been throwing it away, but he did not have the heart to tell her.[20]

After twelve years teaching at West Virginia Collegiate Institute, Mrs. Carter instructed briefly at Bluefield Collegiate Institute and in North Carolina. Then she returned to teach in Kanawha County Public Schools.[21]

The Carter's had no children. Emory Carter died in 1925. The next year Fannie Cobb Carter became Superintendent of the State Industrial Home for Colored Girls in Huntington.

In September of 1935, under the supervision of Mrs. Elizabeth Goodall, Mrs. Carter was appointed to direct the Adult Education Program of Kanawha County Schools. She remained director for two years.

Her next career took her out of retirement to Washington, D.C., in 1945, to The National Trade and Professional School for Women and Girls. The school was sponsored by the National Baptist Convention. There she served as Dean of Women under Nanny Helen Burroughs, noted churchwoman, educator and her personal friend. She did not collect a salary for her seventeen-year tenure. Upon the death of Nanny Burroughs, eighty-nine-year-old Fannie Cobb Carter held the position of Acting President until 1962 when she returned to Charleston.

Rather than move into her own property, she became a guest of the Mattie V. Lee Home, the social and cultural center of Charleston's Black community. While there, she tutored children, stayed up all night reading, wrote letters, remained politically aware and counseled a steady stream of visitors, including Vista Volunteer John D. Rockefeller, IV, who later, as Governor of the State of West Virginia, would praise her as "a whole person, a whole impression, a whole legacy" powerful because of the enormous number of persons influenced directly and indirectly by her

"emotional intensity."[22]

Mrs. Carter's 100th birthday was marked by a distinguished Centennial Celebration hosted by the First Baptist Church of Charleston. She died of cancer five months later, March 29, 1973.

Fannie Cobb Carter was a woman who spent her lifetime taking down bars. She was never content with mediocre work. She expected the best from herself and everyone around her. If she saw a need, whether for the spelling of "Negro" with a capital letter, or for a Charleston Business and Professional Men's Club or a home for young working women (the Mattie V. Lee Home), she named her cause and instigated programs.[23] If she had the opportunity to learn, serve or travel, she went where the opportunity led. She was the first black newspaperwoman in the state, a reporter for the Charleston *West Virginia Advocate* (under editor S. W. Starks) and contributor to the *Charleston Daily Mail*.[24] She taught at Hampton Institute. In the 1930s and 1940s she visited France, Germany, Holland and Belgium. When she tore down bars at a girls' school, removed communication barriers and broke through artificial boundaries determined by sex and race and age, she was building a legacy of freedom.

Fannie Cobb Carter was a persuasive woman. For example, years ago the Institute Homemakers Club was soliciting funds from people in the community. Young Fannie Cobb's task was to try to collect a contribution from a woman "who would call you a 'nigger' in your face," who told Fannie when she knocked at her door early that cold morning, "I wouldn't have a nigger in my kitchen. I'm hanging washrags now. I heard niggers ball up their towels." Undeterred, Fannie simply stated, "I want to tell you about a matter. It's cold here." Invited indoors, Fannie talked until one o'clock, when she walked away with $200 and the woman's friendship. Asked later about the incident, she said, "I like to go where it's hot."[25]

Fannie Cobb Carter was a leader in the fight against illiteracy. She is credited with instigating the phonetic reading program in Charleston public schools.[26] Because it was difficult for her to pronounce, to comprehend the single letter "b," she unraveled the mystery of pronunciation and comprehension for thousands of children.[27]

When asked what she would like people to remember her for, Fannie Cobb Carter replied: "My name, my place and my tomb — all forgotten, the long space of time well and peaceably run, so let me pass away peacefully, silently, only remembered by what I have done."[28]

Visitors to the West Virginia Science and Culture Center at the Capitol Complex see testimony of Mrs. Carter's renown. The Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History has erected a plaque in honor of her contribution to education and humanity. The plaque was unveiled in a June 11, 1977, program sponsored by the Charleston-Institute Chapter of the Links Society, Inc.

NOTES

[1]Two-foot, gold letters identified the State Home. The word (Colored) appeared in parentheses so there would be no mistake that it was a black institution.

[2]The story of the opening ceremony was told to us in a personal interview with Joseph Turner, retired U. S. Army Sergeant, Staff Assistant to the President of West Virginia State College, and, according to Mrs. Carter, "the son I never had," Institute, W.Va., 15 March 1982.

[3]Letter to Mrs. Carter on her 100th birthday written by Mrs. Callie J. Barnett, respected centenarian and resident of Huntington, W.Va., 12 September 1972. Part of the Charleston-Institute Chapter of Links Society, Inc., Commemorative Book of Letters and Memorabilia, File 3, West Virginia Science and Culture Center Archives, Charleston, W.Va.

[4]Fannie Cobb Carter, "State Industrial Home for Colored Girls," *The West Virginia Review*, 4 (April 1927), 275.

[5]The college in Institute, W.Va., underwent name changes. It began in 1891 as West Virginia Colored Institute. In 1915 the name was changed to West Virginia Collegiate Institute. In 1929 it became West Virginia State College.

[6]Byrd Prillerman, "The Growth of the Colored Schools in West Virginia," in *The History of Education in West Virginia*, ed. Thomas C. Miller, State Superintendent of Schools (Charleston, W.Va.: Tribune Printing Co., 1907), p. 274.

[7]Prillerman, p. 274.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid.

[10]The Ruffner farm was a one hundred sixty acre farm stretching approximately from today's Dickinson and Quarrier Streets to the State Capitol Complex. On Kanawha Boulevard there is an historical marker designating the boundaries.

[11]Dolly Sherwood interview with Fannie Cobb Carter, 1972. See Fannie Cobb Carter Papers 1956-1977, MS. 79-15, West Virginia Science and Culture Center Archives, Charleston, W.Va.

[12]Ruth Norman interview with Fannie Cobb Carter, 22 May 1970. One of three recordings (24 April 1970; 1 May 1970, 22 May 1970) courtesy of the Oral History Project: History of Charleston, Kanawha County Public Library, Charleston, W.Va.

[13]Sherwood interview, 1972.

[14]*Financial Record of the Board of Education for Charleston Independent District from July 1, 1895 to June 30 1908*, Board of Education, Charleston, W.Va. The book of handwritten financial records was made available to us by Thurston Keeney and Ruby Peyton at the Kanawha County Board of Education.

[15]Sherwood interview, 1972.

[16]George S. Laidley, "History of Charleston Schools," in *The History of Education in West Virginia*, ed. Thomas C. Miller, State Superintendent of Schools (Charleston, W.Va.: Tribune Printing Co., 1907), p. 178.

[17]Wilma Higginbotham, "Ninety-Nine Years Ago Today — And Still Full of Spunk," *Charleston Daily Mail*, 30 September 1971, p. 23, [Mrs. Carter could not teach the song because she believed that it did not reflect the black experience in America.]

[18]Sherwood interview, 1972.

[19]Ibid.

[20]The story of Fannie's tapioca pudding was told to us in a personal interview with Mary Lewis, former director of Mattie V. Lee Home, Charleston, W.Va., 30 March 1982.

[21]Charleston Public Schools, *Teacher's Record Card*, 1924. Handwritten record made available to us by Keeney and Peyton at the Kanawha County Board of Education.

[22]Personal interview with John D. Rockefeller, IV, W.Va. Governor, Charleston, W.Va., 2 April 1982.

[23]Andrew H. Calloway, former newspaper correspondent for the *Pittsburgh Courier* and first Assistant Superintendent of Negro Schools (1933-1949), in a telephone conversation, 13 April 1982.

[24]Norman interviews, 1 May 1970 and 22 May 1970.

[25]The story of Fannie's confrontation is told in the Norman interview, 22 May 1970.

[26]Jean Rhodes, "Childhood Acquaintances with Educator is Vivid Memory to 90-Year-Old Woman," *Sunday Gazette-Mail*, 17 February 1963, Sec. B., p. 8, col. 1; Calloway telephone conversation, 13 April 1982.

[27]Sherwood interview.

[28]Norman interview, 22 May 1970.

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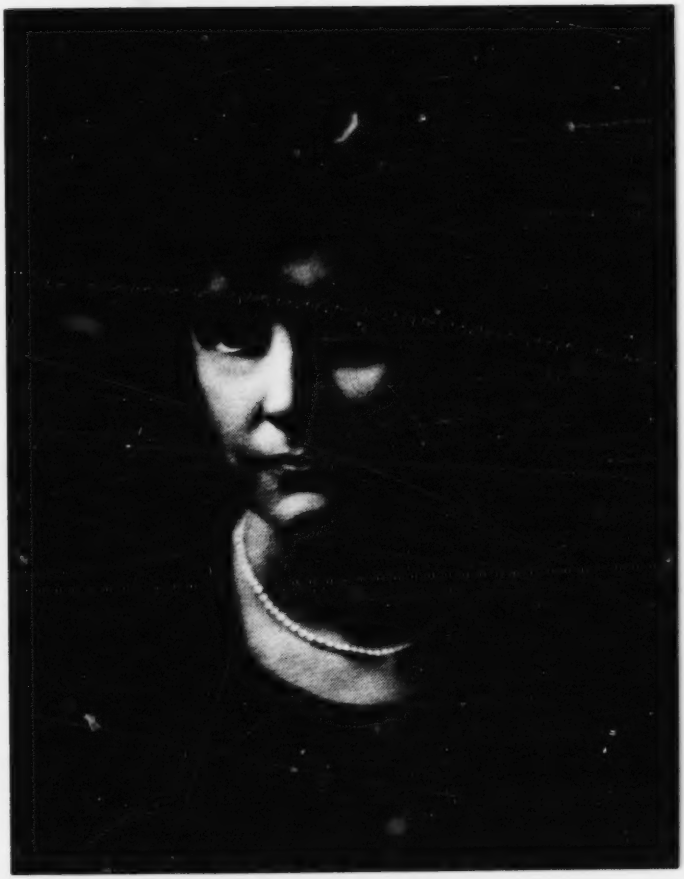

Lenna Lowe Yost

5 *Lenna Lowe Yost*
(1878-1972)

The years of the twentieth century have revolutionized the place of women in the politics of this country. At the turn of the century, women of the United States began in earnest their battles to win the suffrage, the first major step in gaining political rights. In the last decade women have struggled in a renewed battle for an Equal Rights Amendment to remove the last impediment to full legal equality for American women. Additionally, they have moved forward in the areas of education and social welfare. Lenna Lowe Yost's life (1878-1972) spanned these years of dramatic change and she affected them in countless ways, helping the course of women's progress towards political, social, and educational equality.

Lenna Yost's activities during her long life illustrate the work and interests of one part of the women's movement, especially during her years of greatest influence, 1908 to 1934. Her experiences, however, were individual as well. This paper intends to present the outlines of this individual life on the one hand, and on the other to place these individual experiences in a broader historical perspective in order to provide some understanding of the American women's movement and American women's experiences. The paper will also point out Mrs. Yost's important contributions to the social, political, and educational development of West Virginia.

Lenna Lowe was born in 1878 in the small village of Basnettville in Marion County, West Virginia. Her parents, Jonathan S. and Columbia Basnett Lowe, maintained a West Virginia hill farm near the town, which derived its name from Lenna's maternal great-grandfather, Samuel B. Basnett. Lenna's father, a prominent

man in Marion County, died in 1886, when Lenna was only eight years old. Her mother supported her family of four children (Lenna had three brothers) with a millinery shop in nearby Fairview. Mrs. Lowe was successful in her work and was able to send Lenna away to high school and college.[1]

Lenna attended secondary school and undertook some private study and college work in art, first at the home of relatives in Delphi, Indiana, then at Ohio Northern University. She then returned to West Virginia and completed her studies at West Virginia Wesleyan College in Buckhannnon, Upshur County. In September 1899, she married Ellis Asby Yost of Fairview, whose sister and Lenna had been good friends and college classmates at West Virginia Wesleyan.[2]

Lenna and Ellis Yost first lived in Fairview, where Ellis served as mayor while still in his early twenties, and then moved to Clarksburg, where Ellis became a successful merchant. While in Clarksburg, Lenna gave birth to her only child, a son, Leland Lowe, in 1902.[3] Soon after that, when Leland was two-and-a-half years old, the family moved to Morgantown, where Mr. Yost, encouraged by his wife, pursued a law degree at West Virginia University. It was during these years in Morgantown, as Leland grew older and Ellis became more and more involved with politics and legal affairs himself, that Lenna Yost began the career in service and political work that would characterize the rest of her life.[4]

Mrs. Yost's first efforts in the political arena were channelled into work with the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in Morgantown. Her husband was active in the temperance movement and was responsible, while a representative to the state legislature from Morgantown, for the 1913 prohibition enforcement act, the "Yost law," that provided for enforcement of the 1912 West Virginia State Prohibition Amendment.[5] Lenna's work with the WCTU was encouraged by Ellis and she advanced rapidly within the organization. By 1908 she had become state president of the WCTU in West Virginia. She served in that position for ten years, only relinquishing it in 1918 to become the National WCTU's legislative representative and the Washington correspondent for their official organ, the *Union Signal*.[6]

During the same years Lenna Yost became involved in the woman suffrage movement, a movement also of great interest to Mr. Yost, who strongly supported the idea and encouraged Lenna's active participation in it. Mrs. Virginia Brock Neptune, of Fairmont, West Virginia, a much younger cousin of Lenna's, remembered that "Uncle Ellis was terribly interested in the women

of this country, so she [Lenna] fell right into it [the suffrage movement].'"[7] She began working for woman suffrage as early as 1905. Mrs. Yost also rose quickly through the ranks of leadership in the organization that spearheaded the suffrage movement in West Virginia, the West Virginia Equal Suffrage Association (WVESA), serving as its president from 1917 to 1919. And, as if these activities were not enought to occupy the time of this energetic woman, Lenna Lowe Yost joined the West Virginia Federation of Women's Clubs, eventually becoming their state legislative chairwoman in 1915 and campaigning actively for protective labor laws for women and children and other important social welfare issues.[8]

As noted above, from 1919 until 1930 Lenna Yost wrote a weekly Washington Letter for the National WCTU's *Union Signal*. In order for Mrs. Yost to fulfill the responsibilities of this new position, which included sessions in the gallery at Congress and innumerable interviews and social events, the whole Yost family left Morgantown and settled in Washington for a time.[9] Lenna devoted her time and efforts wholeheartedly to this major undertaking, especially during her first year in Washington. Her articles reflect her exhaustive study of the progress of temperance legislation in Washington, and her letters cover this progress, as well as the progress of other social welfare issues of the decade.

In 1920, however, the suffrage movement called again, and the WVESA asked Mrs. Yost to take charge of the ratification fight for the Nineteenth Amendment in West Virginia. She was especially urged to this task by Carrie Chapman Catt, President of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, with whom she had worked two years earlier in Washington during the fight for the passage of the amendment by Congress.[10] Lenna's reputation from earlier work with the WVESA also made her the logical choice for a position of leadership in the difficult battle for ratification by West Virginia. Lenna accepted the office of Chairman of the Ratification Committee of the WVESA and went to work. Her importance to the success of this battle is perhaps best illustrated by the following excerpt from a letter written by friends and co-workers in the ratification struggle to Mrs. Catt after the amendment passed:

> Suddenly and unexpectedly confronted . . . by opposition, when it had seemed that ratification would go through overwhelmingly, Mrs. Yost's handling of the situation . . . has been . . . remarkably able . . . with rare tact and soundness of judgment that we have seldom seen equaled, Mrs. Yost's leadership has brought about a complete victory.[11]

A telegram from Carrie Chapman Catt to Lenna Yost after the vic-

tory was won in West Virginia further indicates the value attached to her work by Mrs. Catt, who viewed the West Virginia ratification struggle from a national perspective and from the perspective of many years of responsibility in the movement:

> Suffrage is won. The words are simple but thrill as few words can do. The people who have followed the course of woman's suffrage from outside with indifference or small understanding of what has been at stake will have no comprehension of the real message which the West Virginia victory carries to women. To us it means that the nation is won, that the seventy year struggle is over, that the women are franchised American women.[12]

Back in Washington after the woman suffrage question was won, Lenna Yost continued her work for the *Union Signal*. In 1922, however, Mr. Yost received an appointment as United States District Attorney for Southern West Virginia, and the family moved to Huntington, West Virginia. Leland was grown and out of school by then, so the restrictions of raising a child were eased for Mrs. Yost, and although her residence remained Huntington, she continued to spend great amounts of time in Washington.[13] In addition, 1921 brought the first of two appointments of Mrs. Yost by President Warren G. Harding to represent the United States at international conferences on alcoholism. The 1921 conference was held in Lausanne, Switzerland, and Lenna was chosen for it as a regular delegate. In the October 6, 1921, issue of the *Union Signal*, Lenna described the event:

> No one could have attended the Sixteenth International Congress Against Alcoholism . . . without being convinced that great progress has been recorded toward the actualization of the ideal which brought the Congress together. Proceedings on the opening day and throughout the entire six days gave evidence of the marvelous growth of the world movement to eradicate the drink evil.[14]

In 1923 she was once again appointed a delegate, as an alternate to Evangeline Booth, who could not serve because of illness. This second conference was held in Copenhagen, Denmark, and Mrs. Yost again reported it in the *Union Signal*:

> The meeting . . . demonstrated that the battle against the age-old race poison, alcohol, is on in every country in the world. Those who were privileged to attend the Congress returned to their homes convinced that prohibition of the liquor traffic is everywhere of vital concern. "It will come, surely come" — slowly it may come in some countries, but it

is in line with the progress of nations — it is inevitable.[15]

The 1920s held even more activities in store for Lenna Lowe Yost's blossoming national political career. After the passage of the suffrage amendment, West Virginia Republicans pursued Mrs. Yost with the request that she begin to organize the Republican women of her state. She served as Women's Activities Director for the West Virginia party for two years, from 1920 to 1922, and then was appointed an "Associate" member of the Republican National Committee. Also in 1920 she served as a teller at the National Republican Party Convention, and she presided over that year's state convention. She served on the West Virginia state platform committee during 1920 and as chairman of that committee in 1922. None of these offices or their equivalents in other states had ever been filled by women before.[16]

Mrs. Yost was actively involved in political campaigning throughout the 1920s, helping to elect Presidents Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover, as well as keeping Republican governors in office in West Virginia during those years. Her husband was also actively involved in Republican politics and encouraged and supported her work among Republican women. In 1930 he was appointed Chief Counsel for the Federal Radio Commission, a significant promotion in his career. At that point, the Yosts moved their home from Huntington back to Washington, although they maintained their West Virginia tie. The move proved useful for Lenna's work as well, for Lenna was appointed Director of the Women's Division of the National Republican Party in that same year.[17]

This appointment was perhaps the most important position Mrs. Yost held in her life. It was the last one she received, by her own choice, and her most significant nationally — it might be considered the culmination of her life's efforts. As Director of the Women's Division, she filled a vital role for the Republican Party. Her position placed her at the forefront of leadership for Republican women, and her influence was great, especially in encouraging activity among Republican women during presidential campaigns. Lenna Yost wrote numerous articles on the subject of women in politics for Republican women's magazines, nonpartisan women's magazines, and professional women's journals. She appeared at Republican Women's Club meetings and conventions and addressed groups like Homemakers Clubs and the National Farm Women's Conference. In person and in radio broadcasts she spoke on the importance of women's involvement in party politics, urging Republican women to be active in their party.[18]

Mrs. Yost believed that the suffrage battle was intended to reduce the division between men and women. In her term as Director of the Women's Division of the Republican Party, she upheld what she perceived as her responsibility in this area by encouraging female support for party citizenship rather than for particular women's issues or for a separate women's party. Her feelings about the place of women in politics are clear in the following quotation from one of her addresses:

> I am an ardent advocate of women affiliating with political parties. Woman, I believe, is an important and wholesome factor in politics. Her natural instincts of loyalty to the things nearest her heart make her a staunch supporter of her own beliefs and an energetic partisan in her new work.[19]

Her belief, however, in the importance of working with men rather than against them is clear in the following "creed" for women in politics from the same address:

> To enter politics with sane, clean ideals; to make the most of her responsibility in promoting good results through good government and to cooperate with men and work shoulder-to-shoulder with them to the ultimate good of their mutual interests.[20]

Women were to add a new dimension of "sane, clean ideals," but they were to put these new concerns to work through already established political parties in cooperation with men.

Another achievement for Mrs. Yost in the 1920s and 30s was her appointment as the first woman member of the West Virginia State Board of Education, which she held at the same time that she was doing her work for the Republican Party. Lenna became deeply involved with the question of education in her state, especially the education of women and their treatment as educators. During the twelve years of her three terms on the Board of Education, that body oversaw administration of all state educational institutions, including the colleges and university.[21] She frequently visited the schools under her care, paying "particular attention to the study of the women on the campus, the dormitory work, diet, health, etc.," according to an article in the July 24, 1926, issue of the *Union Signal*.[22] Betty Boyd, Dean of Student Life at West Virginia University, and Dean of Women at the University when she knew Mrs. Yost in the 1960s, recalled "On any campuses where she was involved she made a personal friend of the Dean of Women and that was her entree . . . and . . . she saw that also as very supportive."[23]

Lenna Yost took an interest in the campaign for the establishment of a women's physical education building at West Virginia University as part of this concern for the education of women in West Virginia. She spearheaded the political activities to have such a building approved and funded, worked closely with the architects and other planners during the drawing and construction phases, and personally chose the furnishings for the new building.[24] According to Mrs. Virginia Neptune, her cousin, "the powers that be" insisted on naming the building for Mrs. Yost, but she firmly declined the honor. The building was named for Elizabeth I. Moore, who had been the principal of the Woodburn Female Seminary that occupied the West Virginia Universiy property before it was chartered in 1867. Not long before she died, however, Lenna told her cousin, "Virginia, if it were to do over again I would have let them name it Yost Hall for me simply because I have four great-grandchildren and they might have been interested if it had been named for me."[25] An oil portrait of Mrs. Yost now hangs in Elizabeth Moore Hall, a tribute to her important work in securing the building for the women of West Virginia University.

Mrs. Yost's concern for women's education took her further than interest in a building that would provide women with a physical education facility. She also took up the cause of having West Virginia University and some of the smaller state colleges receive recognition from the American Association of University Women (AAUW) so that women graduates of West Virginia colleges, and especially the state university, could be accepted as members in the AAUW. In a letter to Dean Betty Boyd in 1967, Mrs. Yost described her role in this effort:

> When I first was appointed a member of the State Board of Education there was not a school, not even the University had met the requirements for membership in the A.A.U.W. I immediately — first meeting — brought the subject *up* and the Board assigned me to begin to work to change all this . . . as the presidents [of the colleges] came before the Board with their problems — or when we called 'em to come — this subject of raising the standards for women was pleaded — and between Board meetings I just plain lobbyed [sic] — visiting schools frequently![26]

The *Union Signal* noted her work in this area and explained that the raising of standards included "giving professorial rank to women, and . . . making salaries equal for the same work and attainments [as men faculty]."[27] During her tenure on the State Board of Education, the AAUW recognized West Virginia University, West

Virginia Wesleyan College and Bethany College, and Marshall College (now Marshall University) was under consideration when she left.[28] In addition to becoming a member of the AAAUW herself, Mrs. Yost was made an honorary member of the national women's leadership honorary, Mortar Board, by its West Virginia University Chapter, in recognition of her efforts for women's education in West Virginia. She was also made an honorary member of one of West Virginia University's social sororities, Alpha Delta Pi.[29]

Lenna Lowe Yost's interest in social welfare issues and education led to her involvement in the effort to have a Federal Prison for Women located at Alderson, West Virginia. Not only did she successfully lobby for its West Virginia location, but she was also interested in the program for the penitentiary. The facility, run by Dr. Mary B. Harris, a noted authority on prison reform in that day, was one of the most advanced of its time. Virginia Neptune accompanied her cousin to a tenth anniversary celebration at the prison in 1937 and remembered from that visit that there were no bars and that they had "the most beautiful gardens," all tended by the inmates.[30] Mrs. Yost served on the Board of Directors for the institution for many years. She was also the first woman to be appointed to the Board of Trustees at West Virginia Wesleyan College, her alma mater. She held her position as trustee for fourteen years, from 1927 to 1942. She was further honored by Wesleyan College when she received an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters at their commencement in 1929. Among the other activities and affiliations that kept her busy during these years were her position on the Board of Trustees of the Barney Neighborhood House, a settlement house in downtown Washington, D.C.; her membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution, the National League of American Pen Women, the National Women's Country Club, the National Press Club, and the Foundry Methodist Church of Washington; and her positions as the Vice-president for West Virginia of the National Farm and Garden Association. These activities, some dating from before her retirement, reflect the breadth of her interests and, in most cases, her commitment to social issues, albeit through conservative channels.[31]

Lenna Lowe Yost retired from her position as Director of the Women's Division of the Republican Party in 1934.[32] She was by then fifty-six years old and had been involved in politics for nearly thirty years, over ten of which had been devoted to the struggle for woman suffrage. In the midst of these years of political activity, Mrs. Yost offered some advice to young women interested in a

political career through an interview with Anna Steese Richardson of the *Woman's Home Companion*. "Choose your ideal in politics and work toward it consistently and persistently," she suggested, advice which she obviously followed. She added, when asked where a young woman should start, "[She should begin] in her own state."[33] Lenna Yost's service to West Virginia provided a good example to follow.

Mrs. Yost's contributions to her native West Virginia stretched across the fields of politics, education, and social welfare. Her hard work and influence as chairwoman of the ratification committee for the woman suffrage amendment in West Virginia was perhaps the single greatest achievement of her career for West Virginia womanhood, as well as for all of American womanhood in that closely-fought ratification battle. Her interest in and work on behalf of women students and educators throughout the state were some of the first in that direction, with her efforts for the equalization of male and female teachers' salaries perhaps the most far-reaching contribution for the future of women in West Virginia education. Her efforts to assure the location of the Federal Prison for Women at Alderson, West Virginia, and her interest in the planning of that prison, gave West Virginia the financial and employment benefits of a Federal institution within its borders and made that institution a model that others would emulate. Mrs. Yost's work on the legislative committee of the West Virginia Federation of Women's Clubs brought much needed social welfare reform to the state, and althought the temperance question to which she devoted so much of her time and talents has lost much of its vitality in our day, her efforts were of great importance in the success of a movement considered by its advocates as necessary to the progress of humankind.

A final significant contribution by Lenna Lowe Yost to the stature of West Virginia was the reputation she created for the capabilities of West Virginia women, as she developed her leadership skills in more and more responsible positions and gained national prominence. Though she eventually settled in the nation's capital, she continually identified herself with her West Virginia background. It was the place where she spent her early years and made her reputation in political work, and she never lost touch with the issues of West Virginia, even after she no longer lived there.

In 1938 the Yosts moved once again, this time to Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, where Ellis served on the Board of the Gordon Oil Company. They remained there until 1947, when they returned to Washington. They both stayed in Washington from then until their

respective deaths, Ellis at 89 in 1962, Lenna ten years later at the age of 94. During their last years, which stretched for a quarter of a century, they remained active in the national social circles of their party, maintaining friendships and acquaintances with most high-ranking Washington Republicans, in office and out.[14]

Lenna Lowe Yost's work represents both the story of an individual woman's life in the first half of the twentieth century and an illustration of the ways in which women were politically active before and after woman suffrage. Lenna Yost's first efforts through the WCTU were a common first step into political activity for women leaders in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Membership in the WCTU was one of the largest among all women's organizations during those years. Because the national WCTU leader, Frances Willard, directed the work of her organization towards a wider variety of social welfare and political concerns and endorsed the woman suffrage effort, women like Lenna Lowe Yost who became involved in the temperance movement gained a wider outlet for their political energies. Mrs. Yost's concurrent work for the WCTU and WVESA was not an uncommon combination for active women.[15]

Interest in social welfare issues such as child labor laws and prison reform was also not uncommon among active women during those years. Lenna Yost's legislative work for the WCTU and the West Virginia Federation of Women's Clubs were within what might have been considered a woman's proper sphere of political interest. They dealt with issues of obvious importance to women as mothers and homemakers, and as keepers of society's humanitarian conscience. Her work on the West Virginia State Board of Education and all that position entailed in the way of concern for conditions of education for children and young adults was also within this sphere of parental and humanitarian interests. Even Lenna Lowe Yost's position of greatest national prominence, as Director of the Women's Division of the National Republican Party, was within the limits of this sphere in the post-suffrage age, because it involved the direction of women.[16]

Barbara Kuhn Campbell, in her analysis of prominent women of the early decades of the twentieth century, *The "Liberated" Woman of 1914*, wrote that during this period, "a husband's attitudes towards his wife's career and activities was often a crucial factor in her productivity and success."[17] This was certainly the case with Mrs. Yost. Virginia Neptune gave much of the credit for Lenna Yost's entering public life to the support and encouragement of her husband, recalling that "he recognized her stupendous talent

and he encouraged her in public life." She added, ". . . he went along with her every step of the way."[38] Other biographers of Mrs. Yost noted her close relationship with her husband, telling readers in one case, ". . . this devoted couple has never failed in daily communication though often separated by great distance. A daily letter went from each to the other, even across the ocean."[39]

Mrs. Yost joined her husband's party and worked only in appointed positions within that party. She refused repeated calls to consider elected office, partly because she didn't think she would be interested in the rigors of campaigning for office, according to Mrs. Neptune, but partly because, in Dean Boyd's impression, "She really felt a woman's role was to be supportive of her husband, to make whatever contributions she could through volunteer work," rather than to set out on an independent route of her own.[40] She was proud of herself as a devoted wife, mother, and homemaker; most of her biographers and interviewers, as well as her cousin and Dean Boyd, commented on her traditional femininity.

Yet the degree of Mrs. Yost's activism, her obviously great talent for organization and leadership, and her strong commitment to politics are not to be minimized because of the arena in which she worked. Her responsibilities demanded tremendous amounts of time, much of it on a volunteer basis, and they frequently required her to live separately from her family for long periods. As for her femininity, she used it to her advantage. Mrs. Neptune's impression was, "The fact that she had no mannish characteristics certainly stood her in good stead . . . she was so feminine and could in a sense get her way . . . [because] she was persuasive in a sweet way."[41] Her positions may have been the result, in some cases, of her husband's influence and party work and of her feminine, unagressive approach to politics and politicians, but they were the result of her own hard work, talent, and determination.

Lenna Lowe Yost's depth of commitment and boundless energies in support of the causes she chose to pursue cannot be questioned. Working within the confines and structures of her own time, she rose to the heights of leadership for women and perhaps, on some counts accomplished more because of her willingness to accept certain limits and follow certain lines of authority than she otherwise could have. In an interview entitled "What I Want Out Of Life," given for the *New York World* in 1930, Lenna Yost claimed that her "biggest 'want' out of life" was "work — a work that takes all the best that is in me and uses it for all the lives it may touch." She added, ". . . I want to do my work so well that I may

be one of the builders of those better times toward which good men and women turn their eyes."[42] Those better times may still be ahead, but for all those good men and women whose eyes are still turned in that direction, Mrs. Yost's efforts have brought them a little closer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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NOTES

[1]Personal interview with Mrs. Virginia Brock Neptune, Fairmont, West Virginia, 20 March 1982; "Lenna Lowe Yost (Mrs. Ellis A. Yost): West Virginia Political and Government Leader," Lenna Lowe Yost Papers, West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University Library, Morgantown, W.Va. Although none of Lenna's brothers went to college, her brother, Glen, was a talented artist whose many oil paintings have been praised by professional artists. Several hang in the home of Mrs. Virginia Neptune.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Leland Lowe Yost eventually became a prominent Washington, D.C., attorney.

[4]Neptune interview; . . .

[5]John W. Kirk. "Progressive West Virginians," Wheeling, W.Va.: *Wheeling Intelligencer*, 1923, p. 237; "Ellis Asby Yost," Obituary, *Morgantown Dominion-News*, 8 January 1962, Yost Papers.

[6]Neptune interview; "Lenna Lowe Yost: West Virginia Political and Government Leader."

[7]Ibid.

[8]"Lenna Lowe Yost: West Virginia Leader." West Virginia Federation of Women's Clubs, *Yearbook, 1915/1916*, n.p., 1916; "Lenna Lowe Yost L.H.D. (Mrs. Ellis A. Yost)," rpt. from *Washington Post*, 1934, Yost Papers.

[9]Neptune interview; "Lenna Lowe Yost: West Virginia Political and Government Leader."

[10]Neptune interview.

[11]Chas. A. Sinsel, et al. to Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, 10 March 1920, Yost Papers.

[12]"Lenna Lowe Yost: West Virginia Leader."

[13]Neptune interview.

[14]*Union Signal*, 6 October 1921, Yost Papers.

[15]*Union Signal*, 18 October 1923, Yost Papers.

[16]"Lenna Lowe Yost: West Virginia Leader"; "Lenna Lowe Yost L.H.D."

[17]Yost Papers.

[18]"Addresses Made by Mrs. Yost as Director" and "Requested Contributions to Magazines by Mrs. Yost, 1930-1934," Yost Papers.

[19]Ellan Orr, "Mrs. Yost is Strong for Women in Politics," *Cleveland Times*, n.d., Yost Papers.

[20]Ibid.

[21]"Lenna Lowe Yost: West Virginia Leader."

[22]*Union Signal*, 24 July 1926, Yost Papers.

[23]Personal interview with Ms. Betty Boyd, Dean of Student Life, West Virginia University, 17 March 1982.

[24]Lenna Lowe Yost Papers; Charles H. Ambler, *A History of Education in West Virginia* (Huntington, W.Va.: Standard Printing and Publishing Company, 1951), p. 567.

[25]Neptune interview; Ambler, p. 567.

[26]Letter to Betty Boyd, 13 February 1967, Yost Papers.

[27]*Union Signal*, 24 July 1926, Yost Papers.

[28]Lucy E. Prichard, comp., "A History of the West Virginia Division of the American Association of University Women, 1923-1948," n.p., n.d., pp. 8, 20, 34. (Bound carbon copy typescript in the West Virginia and Regional History Collection.)

[29]Neptune interview; Yost Papers.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Neptune interview; "Lenna Lowe Yost, Miscellaneous Biographical Materials," Pamphlets Collection, West Virginia and Regional History Collection.

[32]Republican National Committee, Publicity Bureau News Release, 21 December 1934, Yost Papers.

[33]"Anna Steese Richardson Personality Sketch 'Lenna Lowe Yost'," Yost Papers.

[34]"Ellis Asby Yost," Yost Papers.

[35]Barbara Kuhn Campbell, *The "Liberated" Woman of 1914* n.p.: UMI Research Press, 1979, pp. 119-120; Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Belknap Press, 1975), pp. 185-189, et passim.

[36]Campbell, pp. 120-128, et passim; William L. O'Neill, *Everyone Was Brave* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969), pp.

34-35, 50-51.

[37]Campbell, p. 77.

[38]Neptune interview.

[39]"Lenna Lowe Yost: West Virginia Leader."

[40]Neptune interview; Boyd interview.

[41]Neptune interview.

[42]Yost Papers.

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Hattie Hill

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6 *Hattie Hill*
(1880-1975)

A wave of revivalistic fervor swept northcentral West Virginia just prior to World War I and continued well into the 1920's. Evangelists held mass meetings in tents, sessions "protracted" to last as long as the fervor remained high. The most spectacular of the revivals in the history of Harrison County occurred in 1915, when at the Hamilton Tabernacle in Point Comfort services continued in a tent for weeks in the spring. The theater of this event helped keep enthusiasm high: on May 25, 1915, a special train carried people from Salem, fourteen miles west of Clarksburg, to attend the meeting; on May 29, 1915, businesses in the city of Clarksburg closed at 5:00 p.m. in order that workers might have time to be seated in the tabernacle by 7:30 p.m. The total number of converts, "the soul-saving harvest," during the series of meetings was 2,766.[1]

The church during this period was the center of community and all social activities. Ministers and dedicated church laymen were the vanguard of the campaign to improve society, a movement which culminated nationally in the passage of the amendments to the United States Constitution outlawing spirituous drink and giving women of the nation the franchise. Life consisted of the work-a-day world six days a week and church much of the day on Sunday, with any time left over dedicated to good works.

A few months before the Hamilton Tabernacle pitched its tent, James D. and Harriett[2] (Hattie) C. Hill, with their little daughter Pauline, left Williamson, West Virginia, bound for Clarksburg, where they planned to establish their home.[3] On the train Mrs. Hill heard a youth ask the conductor: "Is there a Y.M.C.A. in

Clarksburg?" When the boy heard "No" in reply, he muttered, "I thought it was a good town."[4] The Hills disembarked at the railway station in Glen Elk in Clarksburg. They walked from the station platform to the waiting room of the depot and out the south door of the station to Baltimore Avenue. There they climbed on the trolley car which took them a few hundred yards south on North Fourth Street to the door of the Waldo Hotel, where they registered.

Next morning Mrs. Hill looked out the window onto the lawn which stretched from West Pike Street several hundred feet north to the 1839 mansion "Waldomore," which in 1915 was the home of Richard and Mae Goff Lowndes. Catching Mrs. Hill's eye was a high board fence that ran from Pike Street along the west side of North Fourth Street and the east boundary of the Lowndes property. She saw a dozen or so boys leaning against the fence idling away the time. "Those boys should have something to do," she thought.[5]

Mrs. Hill's penchant for seeing and meeting community needs quickly became evident. She signed on as teacher of a Sunday School class consisting of nine adolescent boys at the First Baptist Church on the corner of Sixth and West Pike Streets in Clarksburg. When the boys complained of "nothing to do" for recreation during the weekdays, Mrs. Hill wrote the International Sunday School Association to inquire about an organization with which the boys could affiliate. The association told Mrs. Hill of the Knights of St. Paul which operated under the name of Kappa Sigma Pi.[6] Mrs. Hill organized a chapter with the nine boys in her Sunday School class as charter members on July 15, 1915. The group met in rooms at the First Baptist Church for three years, at the end of which time forty-five boys had joined Kappa Sigma Pi.[7]

Mrs. Hill's sense of mission made her uneasy sponsoring a club which had aims limited to devotional services and recreation for its members, for she had arrived in Clarksburg at the height of a boom which had hit the city around 1900 and had caused the population to swell by 1920 to 27,869 citizens.[8] Spur lines of the railroad built in the early 1900s from the mainline of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, which ran through Clarksburg, let operators open coal mines in rural areas of West Virginia. The tracks over which coal moved toward Clarksburg carried in the opposite direction boxcars filled with merchandise from wholesale houses in Clarksburg. The city became a distribution center supplying all of Northcentral West Virginia with goods. Discovery of oil and gas brought glass factories and carbon black plants to use the cheap natural gas of the new petroleum fields. Workers came from everywhere. Agents of coal operators sometimes signed up most of the men in a village in Italy

and sent them with their families to Clarksburg, where coal mine operators met them and moved them on to company towns built near mines.

Mrs. Hill saw the need of people beyond the "saved souls" in the center of town; she saw the need of people isolated from their native culture and adrift in a new world. She called the attention of the members of the Big Boys Brotherhood of Kappa Sigma Pi to the opportunity to help and urged the boys to do something for the newcomers to the area. One group of boys chose to hold Bible classes for nonchurch young people two miles east of Clarksburg in Anmoore. The Kappa Sigma Pi members hired a drama coach to put on plays and pageants in Anmoore and found among Kappa Sigma Pi members coaches for various kinds of athletics. They soon had two hundred young people in Anmoore taking part in the activities they sponsored.[9] Another group of Mrs. Hill's boys rode the trolley toward Bridgeport, left the trolley before it reached the town, and walked over the hills to Ocean Mine,[10] where Philadelphia capitalists had built more than sixty houses near the mine in 1919 and 1920.[11] Here the boys taught Bible classes and sponsored athletic events.

Kappa Sigma Pi now had one hundred fifty workers drawn from churches throughout the city and had moved its headquarters from the First Baptist Church to the workrooms of a millinery store on Court Street near the courthouse in the center of the city and then to the building on the corner of Court Street and Mechanics Street (Washington Avenue), both sites so handy to the high school that the boys could hold prayer meetings during the lunch hour. When the Clarksburg Dairy Company moved into the building at Court Street and Mechanics Street, Mrs. Hill invited the boys to make her home their headquarters.[12] And, after the First Baptist Church purchased a residence on Sixth Street, the Kappa Sigma Pi group moved there.[13]

Mrs. Hill's dedication, enthusiasm, and ability to organize attracted the attention of adults in the community. When she led a movement to incorporate Kappa Sigma Pi with the objectives "to promote by education and active cooperation a higher public spirit and a better social order and to that end to organize groups or chapters of young people for training in Christian citizenship; to provide and maintain a home, or houses, for care . . . of dependent, homeless . . . delinquent children under 21; to buy, own, erect buildings,"[14] twenty-one leading citizens, in addition to Mrs. Hill, signed the articles of incorporation on February 14, 1921.[15]

The objectives of the organization as stated in the certificate of incorporation were a portent of what Mrs. Hill had in mind for her work several years in the future. At the time she signed the articles of

incorporation she was busy with arrangements to rent what had been known as the Camden Sommers estate at Spring Hill, a few miles south of Clarksburg on the West Fork River, for the summer of 1921. Here her "young men [might] spend the weekend or as much time as they wish . . . under the control of the churches of the community in entertainment approved by the church. Parents may know young people will be well cared for and chaperoned at all times. Entertainment will include music, pageants, stunts, parties, picnics, swimming, tennis, croquet, baseball."[15] At the end of the newspaper story announcing the opening of the house at Spring Hill on July 15, 1921, were the statements: "Dancing will not be permitted as reported in yesterday's paper; [and] all who are interested are invited."[16]

In the spring of 1922 an evangelist, who visited the city to conduct a revival, chose as a subject for his last sermon "That Boy of Yours." He pleaded for financial help for Kappa Sigma Pi, and at the close of the sermon members of the audience pledged $2,058 toward the purchase of a house for the organization. Ella Curtin, wife of Harry B. Curtin, volunteered to match any sum raised dollar for dollar. The audience named Mrs. Curtin president of the committee to find a house; O. C. Wilt, treasurer; and Mrs. J. D. Hill, secretary.[17] The committee purchased for $20,000 the Frank Reynolds House, 648 West Pike Street, Clarksburg, on May 29, 1922.[18]

The purchase of the house large enough to room and board youths signaled the beginning of a change in Kappa Sigma Pi from a recreational youth organization dedicated to social service to an out and out social agency. The age of the flivver had arrived, and middle class young people were off on weekends to the country club, to one of the several artifical lakes built in the early 1920's near Clarksburg, or off on an automobile tour of the area with a picnic to be eaten along the road. They no longer needed a Hattie Hill to direct recreation for them, and thus, the number of those volunteering for social service decreased.

Yet, in 1926, Mrs. Hill still had a group of young social service volunteers who, organized into groups of nine, sponsored activities that reached from 500 to 700 young people each week. Thirteen boys stayed at the Kappa Sigma Pi home; twenty-six boys used the Kappa Sigma Pi house for temporary housing. The organization sponsored a summer camp at Avalon Country Club near West Milford, and volunteer workers had paid into the home fund $435.75 to keep more boys in school.[19]

When Hattie Hill reported in 1926 that five workers in Kappa

Sigma Pi attended business college and gave twenty or more hours a week in work in exchange for board and room,[20] she described the pattern she had followed in education. Born Harriet C. Fowler in Harrisville, West Virginia, on August 22, 1880, Mrs. Hill's schooling would have ended after she had been graduated from the public schools in Harrisville had not a Methodist minister pointed out a way she could earn advanced training. She entered nurses' training in the Parkersburg City Hospital. By working before and after hours in school and in the hospital, she earned funds for all of her tuition, housing, and board during the nurses' training period. After graduation she married James D. Hill and moved to Williamson.[21]

Mrs. Hill knew the value of being inspired and being shown how to help oneself, and when she incorporated Kappa Sigma Pi "to provide a home for the care of dependent, homeless children under 21,"[22] she put in words the nature of the work she would do for the next fifty-three years. Every child who lived under Mrs. Hill's care could read a motto she had hung on the wall: "Your best helping hand is at the end of your own arm."[23]

One of Mrs. Hill's boys, who, as an adult, was sheriff of a West Virginia county and drove each month from the northern panhandle of the state to serve as a member of the board of directors of Kappa Sigma Pi at monthly meetings, described the way Mrs. Hill handled him and his two brothers when they came to her agency as children: "She grabbed us and all other kids who came to her at the front door and pushed us out the back as she said, 'Work!' "[24]

Not long after she had moved into the house at 648 West Pike Street, Mrs. Hill was caring for children of both sexes and all ages. She could not turn away a homeless child. One time a desperate mother left two pre-school youngsters and a baby at Mrs. Hill's door. Mrs. Hill raised all three and guided two of the children through training to be beauticians. Often Mrs. Hill would be given five- or six-year-olds who had not been toilet trained. She soon had the children as disciplined as the others in her home.[25] And those "others in her home" might number eighty to one hundred boys and girls.

When one hears that the agency, from the start, was very much a one-woman operation, he asks how anyone could do the work. "That is what all of us who worked for her wondered," he hears in reply. "Hattie Hill was everywhere; she knew everything going on everywhere, even in the town house when she was at Avalon; she never took a vacation; she did not flinch in any dire situation."[26] At age eighty-six Hattie Hill reported that she had never consulted a physician.[27]

Carrying out the building program of the agency through the years and raising funds to meet current bills would have demanded the work of three or four had the responsibility been anyone's but that of a Hattie Hill. Of course, Mrs. Hill started her work in the 1920s when boom times in northcentral West Virginia made many Clarksburg citizens wealthy and when the moral tone of society made people generous. So long as they lived, Kappa Sigma Pi was the chief interest in the lives of two of the 1921 incorporators, Ella D. Curtin and E. Vernon Smith.

In 1928, Ella Curtin gave Kappa Sigma Pi a farm of 105 acres, including farm buildings, on the West Fork River six miles south of Clarksburg at Avalon.[29] Now Mrs. Hill could have at Avalon more than a summer camp for her children and adolescents. She could follow her philosophy of the necessity of hard work by putting the boys to work in the fields and at the same time raise a portion of the food needed in the kitchen where the girls prepared the meals and canned surplus vegetables. In 1936, Mr. and Mrs. L. L. Loar gave Kappa Sigma Pi "Ethelhurst," in the same area as the farm, as a memorial to their daughter Ethel.[29]

In the late 1930s Mrs. Hill's organization appeared to be in serious trouble. It may have been lack of safety measures in case of fire that caused the West Virginia Department of Public Assistance to object to any of its clients being cared for in the Clarksburg house. The result was a hullabaloo in November, 1937, during which the founder of Kappa Sigma Pi came from the Cincinnati headquarters of the organization and a trustee came from New York City to inspect the Clarksburg housing unit and the Avalon one. While they were at the Clarksburg house, two buses with representatives from the West Virginia State Children's Bureau and a nurse drove up to take the children to Camp Fairchance run by the Department of Public Assistance near Madison, West Virginia. That course of action was reversed when E. Vernon Smith arrived with the news that friends of Kappa Sigma Pi had called Homer A. Holt, Governor of West Virginia, who gave orders for the removal to stop until after an inspection of the facility scheduled for late in November, 1937. The head of the national offices of Kappa Sigma Pi assured local citizens that none of the children would be taken away and that a drive for money would soon start because $4,000 in outstanding bills must be paid and additional funds for repairs were needed to meet D.P.A. Standards. Attempts to meet those standards had caused the indebtedness.[30]

Bit by bit the Avalon unit of the agency grew into headquarters with the Clarksburg house used only to board older students in

school. The shift required a two-room school at Avalon for which Peter H. Koblegard of Clarksburg furnished the funds. The Harrison County Board of Education hired two teachers to teach Kappa Sigma Pi children in the school nine months of the year. Several small dormitories (cottages) were built for sleeping quarters. The large main building, Curtin Administration Building, furnished office space, dining room, and kitchen, plus rooms for administration housing on second floor.

Mrs. Hill moved aggressively when she needed funds for her boys and girls. She would ask someone to drive her to agencies in Clarksburg,[31] where she sought money for shoes, farm equipment, or maybe money to pay someone to teach a class in music. She usually returned with the money. Mrs. Hill's agency received funds from state and national child welfare agencies and from the Clarksburg United Fund. A Clarksburg physician cared for the Kappa Sigma Pi boys and girls free of charge.[32]

Hattie Hill possessed the natural ability to command respect and to win the devotion of those who worked for her. She knew how to get along with all kinds of people. She hired house parents to live in the cottage dormitories with the children and to supervise the work of the children and the dining room.

Sometimes Mrs. Hill was not too choosy as to whom she hired. One day after a house parent had showed her authority by ordering a child to wait on her at the table, the child answered the house mother in rough language. Sent to the superintendent for the offense, the child went to Mrs. Hill's office. A chastened child reentered the dining room along with Mrs. Hill who said to me: "I feel the way the child does, but I can't let her know it. I can't let children grow up talking impudently to adults. When house parents get authority, they want to use it."[33]

Two women, both devoted to Mrs. Hill, worked with the superintendent for so many years that they were like Mrs. Hill's right hand. At the town house in Clarksburg, Mrs. Wamsley supervised the young people who stayed there in cooking and cleaning and ran one of Mrs. Hill's money-making projects. Known as the "Kappa Quilters," groups of adult women came regularly for twenty-five years to the house at 648 West Pike Street in Clarksburg to quilt. They sold the quilts and deposited the money in the treasury of Kappa Sigma Pi. Mrs. Margaret Longworth for years carried a great deal of the responsibility at the Avalon headquarters.[34]

The boys at the farm raised vegetables, mowed the meadows and lawns, and cared for the chickens and the cows. They were supervised by Mrs. Hill's brother, Mr. Fowler, who lived in a little

house on the farm. After Mr. Fowler's death, a Mr. Davis moved into the house and supervised the boys at work.[35]

In addition to the physical labor that everyone participated in, all who showed a bent for it had training in music. One way or another Mrs. Hill found funds to hire a music teacher. Several of her proteges were proficient musicians. In the late 1930s, one of the five Kappa Sigma Pi boys who were enrolled in Salem College developed into a skilled xylophonist who gave concerts before clubs and civic groups over much of northern West Virginia.[36]

Determined to have a harmonica band which could provide a musical experience for many of her children, Mrs. Hill worked years securing the instruments and arranging for the training of the members of the band. At one time a group of Clarksburg women each contributed money for a fund to hire a resident instructor for the band and for other projects in music.[37] The band, thirty strong, rode the agency bus to put on programs and one time was invited to the Henry Ford Museum-Greenfield Village at Dearborn, Michigan, for a week's cost-free stay during which time they presented concerts. For programs to which children could be delivered and returned a few hours later to the Kappa Sigma Pi Home, Mrs. Hill instituted a policy of not allowing the children to be served food, a ruling probably started because Mrs. Hill knew she sent too many youngsters for organizations having dinner meetings to afford to supply food.[38]

One could use Carl Sandburg's metaphor "an iron fist in a velvet glove" to describe Hattie Hill's talent as an administrator and counselor. She was hardheaded and flexible at the same time. A fundamentalist, she allowed no dancing of any kind on the premises of her agency; yet, after one of her music instructors, who had a private dancing class, sent her tickets for a dance recital, Mrs. Hill attended and enthusiastically converted to the idea of instruction in dance for her children.[39]

In the 1960s a college student who wished to write a term paper telling the history of the agency lived a few days at Avalon and, when the weekend came, took two of the boys residents home with him without asking permission. While in the home of the college student, one of the Kappa Sigma Pi boys stole his host's watch. The finished term paper contained nasty remarks about the kind of "inmates" at the Kappa Sigma Pi Home. Mrs. Hill, ever the realist, remarked: "I knew our boy was a kleptomaniac. One just does not put him in a place where he can take things. I did not give permission for that boy to leave our grounds."[40]

Mrs. Hill's doors swung open at all times. A member of the

board of directors stated that during the troubled times in the sixties he dropped into the dining room unannounced at mealtime over and over. Food well cooked and in abundance was served to residents and any visitor who popped up.[41] During World War II, when gasoline was rationed, a Kappa Sigma Pi boy who attended Salem College invited fourteen of his friends for a weekend at the Avalon. The youths rode the bus to Clarksburg, the trolley to Mt. Clare, and then walked through the country to Avalon. One of the Salem College guests remembers, in 1982, a healthful country atmosphere at Avalon with children engaged in farm work; a stern Mrs. Hill, who spent a great deal of time in the kitchen; and vesper services for everyone each evening. "After the little children went to bed, we college kids built a fire in the fireplace, sang songs, and had a party."[42]

Mrs. Hill's strength was her religion, as natural to her as the air she breathed. She founded Kappa Sigma Pi as an agency to train young people in Christian citizenship and every act was directed toward that goal. She followed no set creed; she admitted all creeds to her non-sectarian agency. But every child had instruction in the basic precepts of religion each day. A little church stands near the Koblegard Building and the Curtin Administration Building at Avalon, and through great sacrifice, Hattie Hill secured an organ for the chapel so that her children could hear "church music." She invited ministers of the area who came to instruct weekly Bible classes. She gave her religion credit for her good health and energy at age eighty-six: "I believe the Lord provides the physical strength to one who tries to work his will."[43]

Somehow, Mrs. Hill even found time to be a writer. She edited *The Pi Magazine*, which came out several times a year. Much of the writing in the magazine, which also carried letters from Kappa Sigma Pi alumni and religious-oriented feature stories by contributors, was from the pen of Mrs. Hill. These selections urged people of all ages to strive to be good and loyal citizens.

In the mid-1960s, when she was eighty-five, Hattie Hill suffered almost as many afflictions as Job and, like Job, she refused to curse God and die. She stood up to her assailants.

One group of plagues that hit Hattie Hill could fall under the heading of bureaucracy. The state fire marshall demanded extensive installations to buildings as safety measures. The health department demanded modern dishwashing equipment; additional screening against flies; elimination of cows, dogs, and cats from the premises and roaches from the kitchen. The Department of Public Welfare told Hattie Hill that she could no longer care for pre-school children; that she no longer admit any child herself but would have only

children "processed" by the state agency and then was sent to Kappa Sigma Pi; that Kappa Sigma Pi Home was a self-contained unit which did not prepare children to live in the outside world; that Kappa Sigma Pi demanded too much work from the children; that house parents needed time off from their twenty-four-hour-a-day jobs. The three agencies, each working independently, often made rulings working at cross-purposes. "But," said a former member of the board of directors, "we realized that the world had changed and that we must enter the age in which we lived."[44]

The agency sold the farm animals and ended the farming operations. Koblegard School was closed and the building was converted into a dormitory. The agency bus carried the boys and girls to the Laurel Park Bridge, across which they walked to board a Harrison County school bus for a trip to West Milford Grade School. Later a county school bus came to the buildings of Kappa Sigma Pi for the children. Mrs. Hill handled the health department by ordering its workers off the premises. She could only grieve at no longer being able to take in any homeless child who came to her door; and she was baffled by a ruling which implied that humankind was not intended to work around the clock.[45]

Then, a religious fundamentalist might say, the Lord saw that Hattie Hill met all the problems, somehow in good grace, and decided to send the "boils." The Kappa Sigma Pi Board of Directors had always had concerned individuals such as Ella Curtin, who steadily supplied funds for the agency, and E. Vernon Smith, who served as secretary for the board from 1922 to 1967. In later years he helped Mrs. Hill with the magazine of the agency and cared for plantings around the buildings. One member of the board, in the 1950s, regularly reported to Avalon in summer to supervise the canning of surplus vegetables from the garden.[46]

But suddenly, about 1965, the president and the vice-president of the board of directors began making radical changes. They closed the chapel and sent the children to West Milford to Sunday school and church. They stopped the teaching of Bible classes by the minister who had donated time for weekly lessons. One time when the children in the harmonica band were ready to depart for a concert, Mrs. Hill found that the two men had locked the door to the room where the musical instruments were stored.[47]

Mrs. Hill carried on with confidence, and when a worker at the agency told her that two directors were trying to fire her for incompetence, Mrs. Hill laughed and said, "Oh, I know about that," as she handed the worker a copy of the latest issue of the agency magazine. When the worker asked her why she didn't give up, Mrs.

Hill replied: "If I leave here, they may sell it to somebody and it won't be the same."[48]

In two years, after the board had passed a ruling that at the end of a term of six years a director must drop off the ruling body for one year before being again elected, the rebels had ended their careers as directors. Mrs. Hill also found support from E. Vernon Smith, who retired from the agency and was named "Honorary Board Member."[49]

Through the suggestion of a Kappa Sigma Pi alumnus, a woman who had run a county home for the indigent in another part of the state came to Kappa Sigma Pi to assist Mrs. Hill. Her husband came as gardener for the agency. Mrs. Hill kept the title of superintendent, her office on the first floor of Curtin Administration Building, and her suite of rooms on the second floor of the administration building. Mrs. Hill ate her meals in the dining room and spent her hours in her office editing the magazine of the agency. "Funny thing," said a former member of the board of directors, "as soon as the children came into the administration building, they made a bee-line for Mrs. Hill."[50] Mrs. Hill's daughter, Pauline Wright of Hamilton, Ohio, came frequently to visit her mother.

When Mrs. Hill was ninety-two years old a new administrator came to Kappa Sigma Phi. Mrs. Hill met the man with insouciance. She moved from her sleeping quarters to her office where she edited copy for the agency magazine, seemingly ignoring the goings-on in the running of the agency. She ate her meals in her office or in her private suite of rooms. At ninety-four she became so ill she was sent to the United Hospital Center in Clarksburg. Two members of the board of directors visited her on March 2, 1975. She was alert and happy.[51] On March 3, 1975, she died.[52]

Fifteen alumni of Kappa Sigma Pi from distant cities and from sites in West Virginia, plus many, many alumni in the Clarksburg area, came to Mrs. Hill's funeral on March 6, 1975. (Burial was in the Bridgeport, West Virginia, cemetery.)[53] Everyone of them said these words or spoke thoughts expressed in these words: "She was the only mother I ever knew."[54]

NOTES

[1]*Daily Telegram* (Clarksburg, W.Va.), 26, 29 May 1915.

[2]The only place found where Mrs. Hill signed her name "Harriet" was in the articles of incorporations of Kappa Sigma Pi. Harrison County, W.Va., *Articles of Incorporation, Vol. 7*, p. 170.

[3]James D. Hill held the position of Assistant Superintendent of Right-of-way, Hope Natural Gas Co., in 1915; Deputy Sheriff of Harrison County in 1923; and owner of a garage on S. Third St.,

Clarksburg, in 1929. *Clarksburg (City) Directory*, 1915, 1923, 1929.

[4]Dorothy Davis, *History of Harrison County, West Virginia*, p. 855.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]*The Sunday Telegram* (Clarksburg, W.Va.), 3 October 1926.

[8]U. S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population*, (1900-1920).

[9]Davis, p. 855.

[10]In 1982 Ocean Mine is called "Lodgeville."

[11]*The Daily Telegram*, 21 October 1919.

[12]The James D. Hill family lived at 114 Lee Street, Clarksburg, in 1917, 1919; 116 S. Sixth Street in 1921; 648 West Pike Street in 1923. *Clarksburg Directory*, 1717, 1919, 1921, 1923.

[13]*Sunday Telegram*, 3 October 1926.

[14]Harrison County, W.Va., *Articles of Incorporation*, p. 170.

[15]*Daily Telegram*, 11, 12, July 1921.

[16]Ibid., 12 July 1921.

[17]Ibid., 2 May 1922.

[18]Harrison County, W.Va., *Deed Book, Vol. 330*,p. 121.

[19]*The Sunday Telegram*, 3 October 1926.

[20]Ibid.

[21]*Clarksburg Telegram* (Clarksburg, W.Va.), 5 March 1975.

[22]Harrison County, W.Va., *Articles of Incorporation*, p. 170.

[23]Personal interview with Margaret H. Early, 11 March, 1982.

[24]One of the brothers of the sheriff became the president of an oil company; the other, the owner of a factory that manufactured bricks. Personal interview with Aubrey O. Robinson, 13 March 1982.

[25]Personal interview with Margaret Holt Early, 13 January 1982.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Davis, p. 857.

[28]Harrison County, W.Va., *Deed Book No. 393*,pp. 128, 227. Between 1945 and 1969 Kappa Sigma Pi bought for sums ranging from $30 to $50, twenty-five lots which had been bought in the 1920s by individual members of a projected "Avalon Country Club," to add to the original farm. Harrison County, W.Va., *Deed Book No. 593*, pp. 231, 247; *No. 621*, p. 365; *No. 663*, pp. 561-7, 169-80; *No. 664*, pp. 1-3, 198; *No. 714*, p. 220; *No. 736*, p. 469; *No. 748*, p. 388; *No. 750*, p. 396; *No. 751*, p. 245; *No. 766*, p. 66; *No. 869*, p. 249; *No. 872*, p. 118; *No. 879*, p. 253; *No. 915*, p. 568; *No. 964*, p. 271.

[29]Davis, pp. 855-6.

[10]*Clarksburg Telegram*, 18 November, 1937.
[11]The agency owned a car which was driven by students or members of the staff. Early interview, 11 March 1982.
[12]In the 1960s the physician was Lawrence H. Mills, M.D.
[13]Early interview, 11 March, 1982.
[14]Ibid.
[15]Ibid.
[16]*Clarksburg Telegram*, 18 November 1937.
[17]Early interview, 11 March 1982.
[18]Personal interview with Aubrey O. Robinson, 11 March 1982.
[19]Early interview, 11 March 1982.
[40]Early interview, 13 January 1982.
[41]Robinson interview, 13 March 1982.
[42]Personal interview with Marie Burns Powell, 8 March 1982.
[43]Davis, p. 857.
[44]Robinson interview, 13 March 1982.
[45]Ibid.
[46]Personal interview with Nina Ford Robinson, 13 March 1982.
[47]A. O. Robinson and Early interviews.
[48]Early interview, 13 January 1982.
[49]Kappa Sigma Pi Home for Boys and Girls, "History."
[50]A. O. Robinson interview.
[51]Nina F. Robinson interview.
[52]Harrison County, W.Va., *Register of Deaths, Vol. 17*, p. 119.
[53]*Clarksburg Telegram*, 5 March 1975.
[54]A. O. Robinson interview.

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Stella Lawrence Fuller

7 *Stella Fuller*
(1883-1981)

When Stella L. Fuller died at the age of ninety-seven, hundreds of people crowded into the chapel of the building which bears her name to demonstrate their feelings of personal loss, love and gratitude. The busy activities of the Stella Fuller Settlement will serve as a living monument for years to come; but the story of this remarkable woman, whose life touched so many others, needs to be set down while memories are fresh.

All the facets of her unique personality were ultimately directed to the goal of service: her legal and business knowledge, her generosity, her pioneer grit, her tenacity, her way with money, her aggressiveness, her understanding of the oppressed and her love for mankind. But so many of these characteristics can be traced to her early life and her ancestry that the story properly begins with the pioneer spirit shown by the Holley and Cremeans families, who were among the earliest settlers of Hannan District, Mason County, West Virginia.[1] Longevity, for instance, could be expected when her grandfather Henderson Cremeans, according to his obituary, was thought to be the oldest man in the country. His age was reported to be 115, while his wife and his mother lived to be 100 and 120, respectively.[2] More pertinent, however, was his reputation for kindness and generosity. His dining room table seated twenty-two, and no passer-by, whether friend or stranger, neighbor or tramp, failed to be invited to share its bounty.[3]

Then there was Stella's maternal grandfather, Cornelius Albert Holley, wealthy farmer and landowner. His outspoken support for the Union prompted passing rebel troops to capture him,

in full sight of his frightened young daughter, and hold him prisoner for a few days.[6] Both grandfathers were ready to take on new ventures, no matter how hard or dangerous: the first followed the call north to dig the Erie Canal, the latter drove cattle overland from the Kanawha River to Baltimore. Cornelius Holley practically handpicked Ballard Cremeans from among the pursuers of his daughter Elizabeth. Why? Because at nineteen Ballard had already shown enough industry and responsibility to be able to borrow $300 to buy a farm. With presumably only the usual schooling available in Mason County in the mid-nineteenth century,[7] he had taught himself enough law to be able to supplement his farm income with legal work. In addition to this and serving as postmaster at Bryan Post Office, he was active in Democratic politics and served as Justice of the Peace for Hannan District.[8] When he died unexpectedly at 45, he owned several flourishing farms and was a well known figure in Point Pleasant and Mason County.[9] As for Stella's mother Elizabeth, married at thirteen, her independent Holley blood showed in stout support for the Republican Party, notwithstanding her husband's Democratic affiliation. When her second husband began selling her farms and pushing for a move to the city, she sent him packing and managed the farms herself. With virtually no formal education, she was able to manage a small store. These, then, were the persons who surrounded Stella in childhood, whose blood flowed in her veins and whose stories and activities influenced her developing character.

Stella Lawrence Cremeans was born December 4, 1883, in Point Pleasant, where her parents had come on business. Her childhood home was a comfortable, well-to-do farm on Guyan Creek near the village of Bryan, about six miles southeast of Glenwood. Her earliest education was at Victory School on Whitten Ridge. Later she attended another one-room but larger school, Fairfield, and was taught for a time by her older brother Albert.[9] The family belonged to the Palestine Baptist Church, where Grandfather Holley was a deacon, and at twelve Stella was baptized in nearby Guyan Creek. The Cremeanses were well enough known in Mason County that the *Weekly Register* took note, shortly before her sixteenth birthday, that "Miss Stella, daughter of Square Ballard Cremeans of Bryan, is seriously ill with typhoid."[9] But illness undoubtedly only compounded the trauma caused a week later by the violent death of her father on November 29, 1899. Because of his prominence, the circumstances caused quite a flurry of publicity accompanied by a rather wild and unfounded rumor.[10] The emotional toll this tragedy exacted from his young family must

indeed have been severe.

Although the family was financially well off and Stella could have stayed comfortably on the farm, she was determined to seek a different life in the city. The Marshall Business College had attractive advertisements in newspapers throughout the state, so it is not hard to see why she was drawn there to seek the training that equipped her for a career and provided her with skills she used the rest of her life.[11] Originally based on the Marshall College campus, sharing teachers and facilities but fiscally independent, the business school had gradually moved its courses downtown, and in the summer of 1903 had been incorporated as an entirely separate institution.[12] In November of that year, Stella Cremeans left her home in Bryan, having sold some of her possessions to finance the venture, and entered Marshall Business College in Huntington.[13] It was probably not entirely coincidental that this was the same month in which Elizabeth Cremeans, widowed for four years, remarried.[14]

The new home of the Marshall Business College was an office building which also housed several prominent businessmen and lawyers, including those who were incorporators of the school. Among the lawyers were at least three who acquired statewide reputations: C. W. Campbell, John Graham and Henry Simms, who had graduated from and had taught at Marshall College before starting his law practice.[15] Even before completing the course, promising students like Stella gained legal experience by filling in when needed in the offices of these fine lawyers. Eventually she was hired as a full time secretary to Russell Wyatt in the firm of Wyatt and Graham. The exceptional relationship which Stella Fuller of later years had with the power structure of Huntington started with this contact with the professionals and businessmen in the building where she was a student.

Through his work for the N & W Railroad, Russell Wyatt had connections with a major law firm in Welch: Rucker, Hughes, Keller and Anderson. With his blessing and recommendation Stella moved to Welch to supervise their large corps of stenographers. E. P. "General" Rucker had already served as Attorney General of West Virginia, and his legal establishment had one of the best reputations in the area.[16] Stella's position there is good evidence of her stenographic and managerial qualifications. An incident from the two years she spent there forecasts one of her later obsessions: When there was an important baseball game which all the staff wanted to attend, it was Stella who wheedled the boss into giving them the afternoon off.

Either before she had left Huntington or during visits back

there, Stella had met and fallen in love with Elmer Fuller; eventually she left her position at Welch to return to Huntington to marry him. Elmer was seven or eight years older and worked for Columbia Baking Company. His grandfather, Aaron Fuller, and his father, mortician T. M. Fuller, had been among the petitioners for the incorporation of the town of Proctorville, Ohio, in 1877,[17] and his uncle, Frank Fuller was president of Union Bank and Trust in Huntington. Stella and Elmer were married on July 20, 1907, in Catlettsburg, Kentucky, a popular place for Huntingtonians to go for nightlife and for weddings.[18]

The events and accomplishments of Stella Fuller's later life have thrown her earlier years into shadow; few of her later acquaintances were aware of the story of her marriage. Stella and Elmer remained married only a little over a year before she found his infidelity intolerable and obtained an uncontested divorce on October 5, 1908.[19] What must have made this decision doubly distressing was that a child was on the way. On October 24, Stella went back home to Mason County for the birth of her son, Robert Vickers Fuller.[20] She had already come quite a circle — from the farm to the city for training, from school to a successful career, then to marriage, disillusionment and motherhood. Now she was back on the farm she had left only five years earlier.

This was not the end of her relationship with Elmer Fuller, however. In the coming years he made occasional visits to the farm to see his growing son and, apparently, to try to persuade Stella to come back to him. He was doing well at Columbia Bakery (the Huntington *Directory* for that period lists him as vice-president)[21] and obviously thought they should try again. On June 16, 1915, they went again to Catlettsburg, this time with their six-year-old son along to join in the celebration of their remarriage.

One night in 1916 on a Huntington street corner Stella held little Bob's hand while she listened to the testimony of the young brother of a Salvation Army officer as he proclaimed the dedication of his life to the service of God. Deeply moved by his words and his sincerity, she compared her own life to his. Her marriage was in trouble again; Elmer was drinking, staying away from home and generally behaving badly. It was clearly a time to consider the direction her life was taking, and the Salvation Army opened a new path before her. The citadel was just two blocks from her home and she began attending services and volunteering her skills. Eventually she was hired as a part-time secretary, earning six dollars a week. As the home situation worsened, she threw herself more and more into the Army's religious and social activities. Although her official

duties were secretarial, she participated in home visitation and street solicitation.

The dramatic and tragic period of the last days of the war served to test the mettle of the city of Huntington, the Salvation Army and Stella Fuller. The influenza epidemic came swiftly and paralyzed the town, shutting down all but the most necessary functions and and mobilizing the citizenry to meet the emergency. Church women served meals to hundreds each day; doctors and nurses worked round the clock, and leading citizens ministered to those in desperate need.[22] Among the many heroes and heroines Mrs. Fuller had a prominent place. Newspaper articles mentioned her by name, describing her valiant work in "visiting the sick and doing what she could to alleviate the suffering . . . In one home . . . she found both father and mother ill in the same room and the little children uncared for."[23]

Then came the report of her own sickness, under half-inch captions:

> Mrs. . . . Fuller, secretary to adjutant C. A. Trew . . . is seriously ill at the army hospital with influenza. Mrs. Fuller assisted in looking after many victims and visiting many homes where the disease was raging, finally falling a victim also. Not only is she confined but her little son Robert and her husband are also patients . . .[24]

Future articles detailed the gradual recovery of the family and added a touching human interest story: "Just before she was taken ill . . . the lad [Robert] accidentally swallowed a nail, but has as yet suffered no bad effects . . ."[25] Rest assured that Bob Fuller never forgot the nail incident, nor would he forget lying sick on the third floor of the Salvation Army building while the streets below roared with the celebration of the Armistice.

Of the 50,000 residents of Huntington, about 6,000 had at least mild cases of influenza and 150 died.[26] But for that heavy price there was small gain: civic leaders visiting the homes of victims were made aware for the first time of the conditions of dire poverty existing in the town. It was clear that the flu, while no respecter of class, was nevertheless concentrated most heavily in the poorest areas. With a sense of shock, citizens concluded that there was "something wrong with housing conditions in the city."[27] One area found especially sordid was the thickly populated area called locally "Johnson's Lane."[28] No doubt her visits there left a deep impression on Stella Fuller.

Although a grateful community was probably touched by the picture of the courageous young wife ill along with her husband

and son, there was a tragedy unfolding at that very time in their home. The marriage was virtually over. Elmer's increasingly frequent absenses and drinking bouts had climaxed the previous spring. He had gone to Akron in April and in late summer had filed for divorce. He returned in October, admittedly drunk, but no reconciliation was accomplished. They were "living in the same house but not together."[29] The charges in his Bill of Complaint centered mainly around her religious activities:

> The said Stella Fuller would continuously persist in her attendance of the Salvation Army, which organization occupied and continues to occupy all of her time . . . [and would] cook your complainant's meals hours before the proper meal time, would place said meals on the table and betake herself to the Salvation Army hall, leaving your said complainant to feast upon cold meals and alone . . .[30]

The initial move had been Elmer's, but Stella's countersuit contained rather more impressive and moving evidence of his drinking, his lack of concern for her health, and his periodic desertion and lack of financial support. Furthermore, she denied all his accusations of neglect.[31] Testimony at the final hearing in February was revealing. Asked if she could keep a full-time stenographer's job, she conceded that even if her health permitted she would probably not give up the work that had become so important to her. Further asked if she would give it up if Elmer would stay home and provide for her, she replied that, "I would be afraid to trust him, he has deceived me so much."[32]

The judge found no merit in Elmer's suit, dismissed it and instead allowed Stella's countersuit, awarding her a conditional divorce "from bed and board" February 1, 1919.[33] Presiding Judge John T. Graham must have been moved to meet her under these circumstances fifteen years after she had come to work for his law firm as a bright young stenographer from the country.

Even allowing for some exaggeration in Elmer's complaints, it is obvious that Stella's work at the Salvation Army went far beyond the requirements of a part-time secretary. Her lifelong commitment to service had been made. It would be another seven years, however, before she made her severance from Elmer total with a final divorce on grounds of desertion.[34]

The years ahead were filled with financial concern and deprivation. One of Elmer's last acts had been to cut off payment for the family furniture. It fell to Stella to persuade the storeowners that she would manage to pay if given time. The house had six rooms and she sublet most of them to help with expenses. For

several years she and Bob slept on a foldable bed in the kitchen — the same kitchen shared by the tenants for cooking. They kept a cow and sold the milk; she made and sold baked goods. Still, in spite of the scarcity of funds, she kept up with an insurance policy and a savings account. Even young Bob, who earned pocket money selling ladies' creams, was trained to deposit his money and watch the interest grow. Her keen business instincts were at work, and gradually the financial strain eased.

Meanwhile Mrs. Fuller, as "Salvation Army Lass," became a familiar sight on the streets and in every place where people gathered, whether it be the Elks Club, a gambling hideaway or the fancy Frederick Hotel with its "Every Evening Club" of leading business and professional men." Whether high or low on the social scale, these were certainly not places where women entered alone at night. And yet, there was always someone to take her around and to nudge the occupants to give, whether from honest generosity, guilty conscience, or the desire to get rid of her. A description given many years later shows the pattern of her operation:

> Stella used to come into Clark's places of business with her tambourine . . . Well, while she was up on the first floor I'd take the tambourine to the basement where we had several games going on . . . I'd just march up to the tables and put the tambourine in the middle . . . "Boys, Stela's here. Pitch in." We'd fill the tambourine 'til it was overflowing."[86]

Although the object of these visitations was to collect money, she was gaining recognition, respect, and trust from an unusually wide assortment of citizens Through the years she never lost touch with them. One wealthy businessman, Daniel Hewitt, expressed interest and concern in knowing how she managed to bring up her son. When he died, his own son decided to memorialize that concern by helping to "make something" of young Robert. The help took the form of sending him to business school for three summers and several night courses, so that by the time he graduated from high school, he was ready for a job with good prospects at the thriving firm of Hardy, Hewitt and Reasoner.

In the meantime, Stella's position with the Salvation Army became more important and more absorbing. Eventually she and Robert moved into an apartment on the third floor of the huge fifty-one-room citadel building She lived there for twenty years, her son with her until his marriage in 1935. The Army was expanding its activities steadily it opened a branch in the depressed West End, provided a dental clinic, became a

Community Chest agency, and organized an Advisory Board of leading citizens.[37] Hard times were coming, and the Army was preparing to meet the needs of the depression.

In 1933, with Stella, now "Envoy Fuller", in charge, the Army established an "outpost" in the Johnson's Lane district — that pocket of severe poverty with its mud and pigs and chickens and outhouses and crowded shanties — the same area that had so shocked the citizens who saw it first during the flu epidemic. The challenge of the outpost opened a great opportunity for the development of her leadership talents, her creativity, and her vision of service. For a non-professional in the Salvation Army, with its military-like hierarchy, she had obtained an unusual degree of authority and responsibility.

A major goal of the Johnson's Lane Outpost was to use recreation as a means of building character and combating juvenile delinquency. The Lions Club had determined through a 1926 survey that this was the area most in need of recreational facilities and had subsequently established a playground nearby. Their rather flippant description of the area included the statement that "among several hundred families . . . there were only two bath tubs, [one] was being used as a coal bin and the other was disconnected."[38] Little else was done in the city toward play centers, the Park Board having decided that its finances should be used to develop permanent grounds rather than to furnish playground leadership and equipment.[39]

Then came the W.P.A. with a directive to provide assistance to recreational projects by supplying equipment, manpower for preparing playgrounds, and specially trained supervisors.[40] With their assistance, Envoy Fuller set out to build a recreational program, a major part of which was softball. Her impact on the young people of that rough and tumble community is best understood from the words of a participant:

> Down in West Huntington, where I grew up, came this dynamic woman, one Stella Fuller, and she was going to organize some kind of a baseball league down there . . . She came with no equipment, no place to play, no balls, no bats. She came with what she always had, and that was enthusiasm . . . Mrs. Fuller got started a thing that was called the Salvation Army Outpost . . . [at] Johnson's Lane. It was a place that God forgot . . . It was a tough neighborhood. It took courage to move in there, but that was one thing Mrs. Fuller

had a lot of . . . [41]

The W.P.A. at this time also had an extensive program of adult education with a national enrollment which exceeded that of colleges and universities.[42] One of the locations of these classes was at the outpost, and it can be assumed that it was through this program that Mrs. Fuller, with twenty years of experience behind her, taught classes in social work.

In the middle of the development of activities at the outpost came the crises of 1936 and the even more devastating 1937 flood. The West End of Huntington was the first area to be evacuated.[43] Although the downtown destruction was terrible, including $3,000 damage to the Salvation Army Citadel,[44] it was in the Johnson's Lane area that the frail houses simply floated away. The outpost building floated off its foundation and was thereafter unusable.[45] But the immediate concern of the Salvation Army was to take care of the refugees. In the many newspaper reports of its work, Envoy Stella Fuller was inevitably mentioned in the same phrase as the commander: "During the worst part of the flood disaster there were seventeen staff workers . . . commanded by Major Rose, with Envoy Stella Fuller as assistant."[46] Another read: "Envoy Stella Fuller is assisting Major Rose in directing relief activities . . . She is also in charge of the refugees at the citadel."[47]

This public acknowledgement of her service and the placement of her name next to that of the commander was a new affirmation that she had reached a high level of authority, in real terms as well as in the public's view. Unquestionably, the heyday of service and growth for the Salvation Army and for Stella's work in it came in this depression era. Regardless of her experience, her hard work and her value to the corps, her highest position would always be equivalent to a "civilian" employee.

From the beginnings of the outpost days, Mrs. Fuller involved people from the community into all the workings of the program, even when problems resulted.

> She . . . had a guy down there that identified with that Johnson's Lane area . . . Peggy Knight . . . something of a reprobate . . . When he was drinking he wanted more to drink and was apt to hock or sell anything . . . Peggy got on a toot . . . Mrs. Fuller'd worked pretty hard to get an old beat up piano down there so they could have a little songfest occasionally. Peggy sold the piano! But she kept him . . . because he interfaced well with that group of kids — not that she didn't. But he spoke their language and she did not.[48]

The day-to-day operations of the playground, along with the

classes at the outpost, were given over to local people and to the supervisors supplied by the W.P.A.,[9] but her interest in the softball program was something special. She loved the game and felt that a successful league team would draw civic attention to the accomplishments of the outpost and inspire the younger players to become involved.[10] An unusual and worthwhile side benefit was her contact with industrial leaders who also sponsored teams. At a time when there were so very few jobs, she was able to get them for many of her young athletes at International Nickel, Owens-Illinois, and other factories.[11] Lifelong loyalty and appreciation is not surprising for such a favor, nor is the later support given her by the industrialists whom she met at the ball field.

In the summer of 1941 the city of Huntington formed a Recreation Board, and Envoy Fuller was one of the organizing members.[12] In September, two months after the arrival of the new post commander, Adjutant Bernard Morris,[13] there was a serious setback to the outpost program: the Huntington Housing Enforcement Agency closed the building, finding it "a fire hazard and unfit for human habitation." In discussing the Army's dilemma, Adjutant Morris disclosed that the Army was considering plans for a new building on the property where the flood had destroyed the building. The plans had been drawn and the cost was estimated to be $25,000. The new outpost was "to be dedicated to Envoy Stell A. [sic] Fuller who will complete twenty-five years of service on October 1."[14] In the end, the old building was repaired, but plans were continued for the new one."

By a year later relationships in the Salvation Army family had reached such a critical state of strain that the proposed dedication seems ironic. In the time that Stella Fuller had served, about ten commanders had come and gone, each having to adjust to the community and to the local personnel while establishing his own authority. Officially there could never be any question as to who had the authority; but the person who had been on the spot for twenty-five years, earning an exceptional amount of independence and building wide community appreciation, had an authority of a different sort. It was a classic setup for confrontation; the only surprise is that it had not come sooner.

The overt cause of the rift was the softball program which had been breaking the Army's strict Sabbath rule with Sunday games. The league teams, which had had good years but had never won a state or tri-state tournament, surprised local fans with a stunning victory in a tournament in Charleston, won another round at Elkins, and was selected to represent West Virginia in a regional

meet. The sports page was full of the feats of "Envoy Stella Fuller's Salvation Army Outpost team." The phrase "managed by Envoy Fuller" and the picture of the team with Envoy Fuller prominent on the back row were probably not very soothing to the already unhappy corps. Besides, there were outside complaints to Major Morris about the Sunday games. They were ordered stopped, but they continued. With society's attention on the war rather than on social problems, the resources of the Salvation Army were strained. To Mrs. Fuller the success of the teams demonstrated the healthiness of the youth programs and justified the cost. (Besides, how could she squelch the triumphant team in its moment of glory?) But to the Army it was an extravagance for a program which not only flouted the rules, but mostly benefited persons not involved in their religious mission.

Of course, the roots of the strain went much deeper than softball. To the organization her activities represented improper independence and outright insubordination. She had overstepped her position, but really she had outgrown it. Her capabilities, experience, and personality equipped her for high-level management, but there was no possibility within the Salvation Army's structure for her to be the manager.

The events of the next few months aroused such strong feelings that nearly four decades later the memory of them evokes distress and even bitterness. The most painful aspect was that lines of loyalty were drawn and sides had to be taken. The contacts Stella Fuller had made through twenty-six years gave her an ample source of support for whatever she would decide to do.

The dispute reached the papers in January, revealing only the surface of the struggle that had been going on in the previous months. There had been a visit for consultation by the division commander who was, by coincidence, the brother of the earlier commander under whom Envoy Fuller had so freely developed her outpost. In the meantime she had privately consulted another organization, the Volunteers of America, about starting a chapter in Huntington. The Board of Advisors were put in an awkward position and a few, including Robert Fuller, resigned to side with Mrs. Fuller.

The formal break came through another classic impasse: she was offered a contract which she felt she could not sign. Though it did give her charge of the outpost, it had other unacceptable restrictions. the evening newspaper headed its story "Envoy Fuller Ousted from S.A., She Says." But the morning paper followed with "Stella Fuller Resigns Post."" It was her claim that she was

pressured to sign before she could meet with the advisors. Major Morris's rebuttal insisted that when she did not sign by the specified date, her resignation was "of an 'automatic nature' and not due to any action, official or otherwise, on his part."[58] Surely at this point neither side had any expectation, or any real desire, for reconciliation.

It was not quite over, for public and private accusation, rumor, and complaint on both sides continued for months, carried on in letters to the editor, poison pen letters, and doubtless in many heated verbal encounters.

In late February there was a long newspaper story on the upcoming opening of the Volunteers of America, listing its advisory board and outlining its program, with "Captain" Stella Fuller in command.[59] The announcement was premature since the city's Public Solicitations Committee ultimately turned down the application to solicit funds in Huntington. In fact, the program was already in place informally in a building rented by Mrs. Fuller. She had opened on January 10, in a spot very near the outpost, with very little except her own resources and the good will and volunteer help of the neighborhood. Many times in years to come she expressed her gratitude at the city's rejection of the Volunteers of America.[60] For now there was only one way to go: an independent settlement with no confusion as to who would pilot its course. The incorporators (later the board of directors) included prominent persons from a wide range of occupations: lawyer, doctor, industrialists, school principal, labor leader.[61] The years of association with the whole spectrum of the population now made this support available. The board had no trouble selecting the name; the Stella Fuller Settlement was born!

The newly rented building had other tenants upstairs. With space only for a chapel and a kitchen, the other programs were farmed out nearby. The first "truck" was a handcart, pushed by a neighborhood boy. Mrs. Fuller's "right hand man," then, as always, was her son Robert, vice-president of a real estate company which had just announced major expansion.[62] He was, after all, well experienced in social service himself, having lived in the Salvation Army Citadel for most of his formative years and having served as volunteer and board member afterwards.

The techniques and philosophy of the Salvation Army were so thorougly ingrained in Stella Fuller that it was natural to continue using them. But it did not go unnoticed or uncriticized that their "trademarks" — the tambourine, the street corner concerts, etc. — were "borrowed" so wholeheartedly.

At a period when national social agencies, along with government programs, were more and more replacing independent agencies, it is significant that the Huntington community quickly accepted the home-based agency. This could only be attributed to the trust built up through the years by this aggressive, single-minded, dedicated woman. A business leader described it:

> I don't think Stella Fuller ever approached me with a problem that I didn't say "Stella — how much do you need?" I'd give her something towards it and try to get her some others . . . She had the respect and the admiration of the more substantial people in Huntington. Her industry and her constant effervescence and enthusiasm to help people wore off on you, and you contributed . . . Her actions spoke louder than her words . . . She was so enthralled with what she was doing and knew it was so right . . . [63]

The first annual report, published in a triumphant full-page newspaper spread, showed remarkable accomplishment in service and in aid to people for an expenditure of less than $9,000. The conservative business woman had shown, as she would again and again, how much could be done with small resources. The success of the first year provoked ambitious plans for expansion, starting with the purchase of the building.[64] She was off and running!

Only three years later a writer for the *Herald-Advertiser* said that the Stella Fuller Settlement was "ranking high among Huntington forces fighting to take youth off the streets and give them healthful supervised recreation." *Herald-Advertiser* Treasurer E. H. Long wrote a few years later that "the very fact that I have served as president for the past twelve years is proof of my confidence in the general set-up of the organization and the realization of the need for its existence . . . I have been especially impressed with the economical way the funds are handled . . . to accomplish so much with so little . . . "[65]

Accomplishing much with little was partly good business sense, but also the result of Mrs. Fuller's aid and ability to pull in volunteers and to give them responsibility. When staff had to be hired, her stated philosophy was to "employ people who are sufficiently interested in this work to feel that they are donating part of their time, and those who have very little personal responsibility, or who have some outside income."[66]

The manner of involving many people in projects is interestingly illustrated by the Stella Fuller Band. Over the years nearly every musician in Huntington who plays a band instrument has participated in the summer concerts, and the city's best band

directors have led it. From the outset, music has permeated the Settlement's activity and the lives of the Fuller family.

One organization with which Stella Fuller had a unique and close relationship was the Huntington Police Department. When similar social institutions had closed their doors for the night, the phone by Stella's own bed might ring at any hour with a call from the police for help with some emergency. A former officer enthusiastically confirmed the frequency of this occurrence:

> Oh, many, many, many, *many* times. It happened in my own experience [as dispatcher and as desk sergeant] and later I instructed the new dispatchers to call her. Anytime — two, four in the morning — she took them, fed them, clothed them, did whatever was needed. She came through like gangbusters. I never remember not getting help . . . I never met anyone like her . . . [67]

When the Settlement could no longer house transients overnight themselves, they issued vouchers which were honored at economical hotels. The police and certain other agencies could use these at their own discretion, and the Settlement paid the bill.[68]

Statistics showing the growth in programs and service during the first four decades of the Stella Fuller Settlement have a certain value in assessing the accomplishment of the woman responsible. These figures reveal steady increases in the number of persons helped, in attendance at activities, in numbers of children using the playground, in Easter breakfasts and Thanksgiving dinners served, in transients housed, and in toys and clothes and food distributed. They also show the nine-fold increase in the budget since the first year and total services, including "in kind" and actual dollars spent, valued at nearly a million and a quarter dollars in the last year of the founder's life.[69] Certain principles remained constant: much was accomplished with little, salaries remained minimal, and volunteer work accounted for a major share of the accomplishment.

Another manner of illustrating the development of the institution would involve a chronology of major events or changes: the purchase of the building; the addition of the gymnasium; the enlargement of playground facilities; the affiliation with the United Fund; the coming of Robert Fuller as full-time assistant and chaplain; the fire in August, 1980, which devastated the building but not the spirit; the subsequent rebuilding with new chapel and kitchen; the proclamation by the mayor designating October 14, 1980 as "Stella Fuller Day;" and finally, the death of the beloved founder and director. The end of a long and useful life, filled with

love and hard work, came when Stella L. Fuller died on March 2, 1981.

But facts, figures, and dates are only supplementary material in assessing such an extraordinary life. They do little to show the source of her strength and motivation. The web of her personality was extremely complex, and yet many of its strands can be traced to her early experiences and her inheritance. One theme predominates: she wasted nothing . . . not time or energy, not training or personal contact, not money or material goods. Least of all did she waste experience; each bit of it that life brought her, good or bad, added to her strength.

If she wasted nothing, neither did she withhold anything. What she had learned and experienced, she shared, teaching those who would learn, whether it was typing and bookkeeping, or setting tables "the way she wanted it done."[70] Her very presence could make a healthy teen-aged boy willingly spend hours at her side, learning from her, reading to her when her eyes failed, exchanging jokes ("she loved a good joke, as long as it was clean") while he "did" her hair; and that presence would draw him back years later to be at her side in her final illness.[71]

Although Stella Fuller's endeavors were supported by widely disparate groups of people, by far the largest group were those who reached daily to her for help, those whose lives she made better or easier. Hundreds passed by and received occasional or temporary help, but for hundreds of others Stella Fuller and the Stella Fuller Settlement were like family, home and church. And these are the people who still feel keenly the void left by her absence.

Even when the body failed, the mind was at work . . . worrying, planning. In her last weeks she would wake in the middle of the night and ring for help to get up because "there's work to be done." Because she shared her love and her courage and her skills, others are prepared to carry on that work to which she devoted her whole being.

NOTES

[1]"History of Mason County," in *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia, Illustrated: Special History of the Virginias* (Chicago: H. H. Hardesty and Co., 1883), p. 11.

[2]*Mason Republican*, 29 January 1909, p. 1. There was likely some exaggeration of his age at death. The census records for 1860, 1870, and 1880, while they do not agree with each other entirely, put his age at about ten years younger, and an item in the *Weekly Register* (25 December 1901), while it calls him the oldest man in the country, puts his age at 93.

[5]Personal interview with Robert V. Fuller, 18 March 1982, at the Stella Fuller Settlement, Huntington, W.Va. This and virtually all family history and descriptions of subject's personal life were taken from a series of taped interviews and informal discussions, totaling about eight hours. In every instance where verification could be found in a written record it was sought. Nevertheless, the writer is deeply indebted to Mr. Fuller for information which could be obtained in no other way.

[6]This probably happened in the spring of 1863, when there were several skirmishes at Point Pleasant.

[7]"History of Mason County," p. 11. In 1883 there were 16 1/2 schools in Hannan District (the "1/2" was one shared with Cabell County), and they were open for four months a year.

[8]This accounts for the title "Squire" inevitably attached to his name in the newspaper. His name appears in the financial statement of Mason County as a justice (*Weekly Register*, 5 August 1896).

[9]His name is found often in the newspaper, suggesting frequent official or business visits to Point Pleasant, (*Weekly Register*, 13 September 1899, 25 October 1899, 15 November 1899, and others).

[10]Financial statements of Hannan School Districts include his name as teacher (*Weekly Register*, 1 July 1896, 12 July 1896).

[11]"Personal Mention," *Weekly Register*, 15 November 1899.

[12]*Weekly Register*, 6 December 1899, p. 1; *Charleston Daily Gazette*, 30 November 1899, p. 1; *Wheeling Intelligencer*, 30 November 1899, p. 1. Over two months later, the *Weekly Register* found it appropriate to castigate severely the persons responsible for sending unfounded rumors to papers around the state (31 January 1900, 7 February 1900).

[13]Marshall Business College ledger, Archives, Marshall University. Notations of expenditures for advertisements are scattered throughout. One example of the advertisement ran for at least three months in the *Weekly Register* beginning 11 December 1901. It stressed that its "close identification with the business interests of the three states immediately adjoining enables us to readily secure employment for our graduates."

[14]Description of affiliation with Marshall College in *Bulletin*, (Huntington, W.Va.: Marshall College, 1904), p. 39. Incorporation: West Virginia Secretary of State, *Corporation Reports* (Charleston, W.Va.: Tribune Printing Co., 1903), pp. 459-60. The incorporators were H. C. Harvey, H. M. Simms, C. R. Wyatt, R. Vickers, and R. L. Hutchinson.

[13]The ledger of the Business College (p. 39) shows that she registered there on 3 November 1903. The tuition for the bookkeeping and stenography courses (13 months) was $60. See *Bulletin*, pp. 39-40.

[14]*Weekly Register*, 25 November 1903. She married J. H. Daigh of Waynesburg, Kentucky.

[15]See George Atkinson, *Bench and Bar of West Virginia* (Charleston, W.Va.: Virginian Law Book Co., 1919) for biographies of Campbell, p. 295; Graham, p. 212; Simms, p. 502. For Simms' teaching at Marshall College, see 1902 *Bulletin*, pp. 39-40.

[16]Atkinson, pp. 252-5; 378-79; 282-8.

[17]Alda Suiter McConnel and Bernice Beckett, *Proctorville Centennial 1878-1978* (n.p.: Centennial Committee, [1978]), p. 2.

[18]Date of wedding testified to in "Fuller vs. Fuller," Cabell County Circuit Court, Chancery Book 19, p. 486.

[19]Ibid.

[20]He was named for a very prominent and popular doctor in Huntington, Robert E. Vickers. His biography may be found in *Men of West Virginia* (Chicago: Biographical Publishing Company, 1903), pp. 376-77.

[21]*Polk's Huntington City Directory* (Pittsburgh: R. L. Polk Co., 1915).

[22]Including President Woodley of Marshall College, who not only headed the Citizen's Commission but volunteered as a male nurse. See *Herald-Advertiser* [Huntington, W.Va.], 15 November 1918, p. 12.

[23]*Herald Advertiser*, 16 October 1918, p. 7.

[24]*Herald Advertiser*, 29 October 1918, p. 10.

[25]*Herald Advertiser*, 7 November 1918, p. 5.

[26]*Herald Advertiser*, 2 November 1918, p. 4.

[27]*Huntington Daily Dispatch*, 2 November 1918, p. 2. See also *Huntington Advertiser*, 27 October 1918.

[28]*Huntington Advertiser*, 14 October 1918.

[29]Cabell County Circuit Court, Testimony, 1 February 1919, in the case of Elmer Fuller vs. Stella Fuller.

[30]Cabell County Circuit Court, "Bill of Complaint" in case of Elmer Fuller vs. Stella Fuller, entered 7 September 1918.

[31]Cabell County Circuit Court, "Answer of Stella Fuller," entered 7 September 1918.

[32]Cabell County Circuit Court, Testimony, 1 February 1919, in the case of Elmer Fuller vs. Stella Fuller.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Cabell County Circuit Court, "Stella Fuller vs. Elmer Fuller," final decree, 8 December 1926.

[35]Telephone interview with James Edwards, 16 April 1982. Mr. Edwards lived in the Frederick Hotel as a child and was well acquainted with this nightly gathering of city leaders. Robert Fuller also described his mother's regular stops there.

[36]Jack Seamonds, "Stella Fuller Benefactor Was Bookie," *Herald-Dispatch*, 22 November 1979. The person quoted is Eddie Shanklin.

[37]*Huntington Advertiser*, 27 August 1939.

[38]*Huntington Advertiser*, 4 August 1939.

[39]W. C. Batchelor, Project Director, *Recreation and Youth Services Survey and Agency Self-Appraisal Project for the City of Huntington*. (Huntington, W.Va.: Wiseman Business School, 1954), p. 33.

[40]Ibid, p. 35.

[41]Personal interview with Sam Clagg, 1 April 1982, at James E. Morrow Library, Marshall Univeristy.

[42]*Huntington Advertiser*, 8 February 1937, p. 2.

[43]*Huntington Advertiser*, 19 January 1937, p. 1.

[44]*Huntington Advertiser*, 1 February 1937, p. 6.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Ibid.

[47]*Huntington Advertiser*, 25 January 1937.

[48]Clagg interview.

[49]One of the supervisors was Otto "Swede" Gullickson, a young teacher in the Physical Education Department of Marshall College. Gullickson Hall, on the Marshall campus, is named for him.

[50]Clagg interview.

[51]Ibid. Dr. Clagg was one of those she helped in this way by getting him a job at International Nickel. Robert Fuller also discussed her job-procuring talents.

[52]*Huntington Advertiser*, 3 June 1941, Section 2, p. 6.

[53]*Huntington Advertiser*, 27 June 1941.

[54]*Huntington Advertiser*, 26 September 1941.

[55]*Huntington Advertiser*, 1 October 1941.

[56]*Huntington Advertiser*, 1 September 1942, 24 August 1942, 26 August 1942.

[57]*Huntington Advertiser*, 4 January 1943; *Herald Dispatch*, 5 January 1943.

[58]*Herald Dispatch*, 5 January 1943.

[59]"New Welfare Group To Open Headquarters," *Huntington*

Advertiser, 28 February 1943.

[60]Personal interview with William Newcomb, 19 April 1982. Mr. Newcomb was a member of the committee.

[61]There are twenty-five names on the papers of incorporation. Some prominent ones are: Frank Enslow, coal company president; Samuel Biern, lawyer; Dr. R. M. Bobbitt; E. H. Long, Treasurer, Huntington Publishing Company; J. F. Fesenmeier, President, Fesenmeier Brewery; A. S. Shofstall, General Manager, International Nickel; Max K. Jones, Manager, Huntington Water Corporation; Postmaster J. W. Dingess.

[62]*Huntington Advertiser*, 5 April 1943, p. 3.

[63]Telephone interview with James Edwards, President, National Mattress Company, 16 April 1982. He is a board member of Stella Fuller Settlement.

[64]*Herald-Advertiser*, 6 August 1944.

[65]Bill Belanger, "Preventive Measures Held Basis of Settlement Work," *Herald-Advertiser*, 24 February 1946, p. 12.

[66]Batchelor, pp. 201-02.

[67]Telephone interview with Donald Salyers, Director of Security, Marshall University, 23 April 1982.

[68]Ibid.

[69]Stella Fuller Settlement, Inc., "Budget Recapitulation," 5 May 1981; "Inventories-'Kind' Valuation and Conservative Estimate of Services Rendered . . . " Calendar Year, 1981.

[70]Personal interview with Jim Byrd, Stella Fuller Settlement staff member, 20 April 1982.

[71]Ibid. This and all subsequent quotations and impressions came from an informal group discussion with Jim Byrd, Victoria Roberts (staff member), and Kay Martin at the Stella Fuller Settlement, 20 April 1982. Each of these persons was intimately acquainted with Stella Fuller, especially in the last years, and each contributed to and echoed the sentiments of the others.

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Ella Lively Holroyd

100

8 *Ella Lively Holroyd*
(1885-1981)

In the beautiful mountains of southern West Virginia, you hear the sounds of trains and trucks bringing coal from the great Pocahontas field, and at times the sounds of mourning for the dead from the mine disasters. But you also hear sounds of bands, orchestras, glee clubs and a piano, and it is those sounds that honor a diminutive lady who brought music to southern West Virginia for almost all of her ninety-five years.

In a harsh land of deep mines, of union wars and black lung, of folk singers and three-chord guitars, Miss Ella Lively Holroyd taught the music of the masters, and by the sheer force of her personality and musicianship, she lifted others to something better than they had known.

She was born in Mercer County where her family had established Concord Church by the time of her birth in 1885. Her father, James French Holroyd, was a teacher for forty years at the Concord State Normal School which had been established in 1872. Known as Uncle Jimmy to the students, James Holroyd has been honored by Concord College with a plaque in the Administrative Building, the only teacher so honored. He is also memorialized by his daughter. Commenting upon her father in personal notebooks, Ella Holroyd told of her admiration: "This was my father, one of the best, most high principled, honest, fair, intelligent, thoughtful, kind, modest men that ever lived. With few advantages in education, he became one of the finest teachers Concord College ever had."

When William and Sarah Holroyd came from England to the

Pisgah Valley in 1847,[1] they came primarily as missionaries of the Methodist Church. They established a church where the town of Athens is now located[2] and Sarah named it Concord Church because all denominations were to worship together "in harmony, sweet fellowship, and concord."[3]

Concord Church became the County Seat of Mercer County in 1865, and William Holroyd's "Mountain House" became the social and political center of the county.[4] From this center of activity also came the political movement to establish Concord Normal School.

Ella Holroyd's mother, Bettie Lively, had ridden by horseback from Greenbrier County with her brother Frank about 1880 to attend Concord State Normal. It was there that she was to meet James French Holroyd, son of William and Sarah,[5] and they were married in 1882. Brother Frank became a Justice of the West Virginia Supreme Court. James died in 1920, and Bettie remained at Concord for many years in the office of the Registrar and then the office of the President. She died in 1954 at the age of ninety.

James and Bettie Holroyd were the parents of nine children, four sons and five daughters, the oldest daughter being Ella Lively. While tending Mountain House and raising nine children, Bettie Holroyd found time to become the first president of the Mercer County Welfare Board, the first woman to serve on the town council, the patroness of Sigma Sigma Sigma Sorority, and an office worker in the college.

Ella was about four years old when she was sent to school, but she had been getting lessons from her father and mother long before that. One of her earliest recollections was of her father's pleasure in reading his *Louisville Courier Journal* each evening.[6] Ella would sit on his lap and get lessons as he read. From her mother, Ella received early schooling in McGuffey's Readers and was well prepared when the first "free" school opened in Concord Church.[7]

In her notebook, Ella, always a humorist, noted wryly that, "It (the school) was put there so the country children, the Bolens, Virgie Oxley, the Birds, and the Vermillions, wouldn't have to walk so far. Centrally located, one might say, so we all had to make the long walk. It was far from everybody."[8] Moreover, the school didn't much impress Ella, as she wrote, "My legs hung down from a high bench all day. We had no blackboard, all drank out of the same dipper, cold lunch, no milk. We enjoyed some of the things, but we learned nothing."[9] She also wrote, "I always stopped at the Girls' Dormitory to practice an hour on the piano in the big parlor.

Sometimes I went past time and didn't get to school until eleven o'clock. Nobody cared."[10]

However, Ella recalled, "One day people said that this school would go no further. Next year you will go to Concord Normal School. I dreaded that."

At that time, Concord was more of a high school than a college, and it wouldn't become a real college until about 1920 with the first A.B. degree being granted in 1923. Later in life, Ella was to say that she had known all twelve of Concord's principals and presidents.

Looking back on her education at Concord Normal School, Ella wrote that "Geometry was the silliest thing I ever studied. What good did any of it ever do me?"[11] Then Harry Karnes, in Ella's words, "a mathematical genius from Emory and Henry," came to teach geometry. Ella went through the whole geometry discipline with Mr. Karnes and was with him on the next to last day before she was graduated in 1904. "It was 5 p.m., and I had to go home to milk. Nobody at home could milk but Mama and me, and she was getting supper while Mary tended the baby. We couldn't work the long propositions on the board, and Mr. Karnes waited and waited. After a while, he saw that it was hopeless, so he pointed to a "2" in each long line of letters and figures, and hallelujah, a spark of intelligence lit in my dark mathematical region, and I closed out and graduated the next day."[12]

One may note the character of Ella Holroyd as she wrote, "Dear Mr. Karnes. Bless his memory. He was so brilliant in math, and I was so stupid. But we had a bond of friendship all our lives."[13] One may also note her character, as she continued to labor mightily and passed with flying colors.

In 1904, at age nineteen, Ella Lively Holroyd began the teaching career that would span the next seventy-five years. Already Ella knew that music was to be her life. She had been practicing for many years, even when her family couldn't afford a piano, and she had played at church, at literary gatherings, and commencements.

Nevertheless, she was so unsure of herself that she sought a teaching position far removed from Athens so that nobody would know if she failed. She found this post in Turkey Knob, Fayette County, teaching pupils up and down the railroad.

After a year at Turkey Knob, Ella's family had put together enough money for Ella's education at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. On a cold winter day, Ella and "Dad" Hartman set out for Hinton and the railroad station. She stayed the night with her

Uncle Frank Lively, and she set out the next day for Cincinnati.

The memory of Ella's arrival at the Conservatory would remain to the end of her life. Getting off the streetcar on Highland Avenue, she looked up at the Shillito Mansion and the dormitory, "all lit up with 350 girls from all over the South. Nothing will ever come up to that moment except when I wait for the Pearly Gates to open." Ella retained that enthusiasm well up into her nineties.

Ella soon found that her preparation was insufficient for the advanced courses at the Conservatory, but she brought her skills up to the level required. Regarding these first terms, Clara Baur, Director and Founder of the Conservatory, wrote: "Possessing the enthusiasm which characterizes artistic natures that ever strive for higher states of advancement, she will likewise inspire her pupils and thus her course as a teacher will be marked with success."[14] Seventy-some years later, the record would show that Miss Baur's prophecy was fulfilled in all respects.

It was not to be a straight line to graduation for Ella. After completing two years at the Conservatory, Ella left to teach school so that her younger sister Mary could attend the University. She often called these years her "Kentucky years."

Ella created a brilliant record at the Russell Creek Academy in Campellsville, Kentucky. During the four-and-a-half years there, Ella's students became known throughout the state, winning many state-wide competitions such as the Bluegrass Tournament. Upon her return to Cincinnati, her principal, R. Garnett Graves, wrote: "I do not believe she has a superior in the state of Kentucky."[15] In addition, J.L. Atkinson, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, wrote: "Personally, Miss Holroyd is a lady in the highest interpretation of the word."[16]

Leaving Russell Creek, Ella Holroyd returned to the Cincinnati Conservatory for the completion of her degree in piano and voice. She was graduated with honors in August, 1914.

Ella moved back to Mercer County as a public school teacher. For eighteen years she interspersed her teaching with periods of post graduate study at Juilliard in New York; the Royal Conservatory in Milan, Italy; Chicago Musical College; Cornell; and finally, Columbia. Ella received her degree of Master of Arts in 1948 from Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was then President of Columbia University.

In 1932, Ella Lively Holroyd came home. President Joseph Franklin Marsh, Sr. (1925-1945) asked Ella Holroyd to create a music department for Concord College. In 1976, Ella told a reporter that "I told him if you'll get a grand piano and put it on

the stage, I'll come. He did, and then, wouldn't you know it, everyone began to fuss because the noise upset the chemistry class and the matrons' afternoon naps."[17]

In the beginning, Ella was the entire music department. She taught the music curriculum and organized the Concord Choir and Madrigal Singers. Students still recall the tiny professor, always on the run, a familiar sight on the campus.

It wasn't long before the music department of Concord was drawing students from a wide area. By 1938, Concord was awarding certificates of teaching qualifications; the first degree in Music Education was awarded in 1948. The music faculty was expanded, and Ella's pupils were in demand.

The Pines, an official history of Concord College, notes the strength of the department under Ella Holroyd: "Under her leadership, the music department became one of the strongest departments in the college and a leader in music education in the state." *The Pines* quoted knowledgeable music teachers as claiming that the Concord department under Ella Holroyd was the best in the state, including the University.

On the dedication page of *The Pines*, Ella Holroyd is characterized in this way:

To the descendant of a family that from the very beginning nurtured Concord College in the finest ideals, not only in learning, but also in the whole way of living; to a person who in herself, a profound scholar, has given freely of her knowledge, talent and rich personality to college and community; to one who in her relationship to the school and the state has become a name loved and revered wherever mentioned, we, the committee, affectionately dedicate this part to:

Ella Lively Holroyd,

Gentlewoman[18]

Upon her retirement in 1952, the student body honored Professor Ella Holroyd with a dedication in the school yearbook *The Pine Tree*. They wrote: "Her friendly smile and cooperative attitude have helped keep alive the spirit of the friendly college. It is with deep appreciation for untiring service that we dedicate this 1951 *Pine Tree* to Miss Ella Holroyd."[19]

Although sixty-seven years old at the time of her retirement from Concord College, Miss Ella was, in a very real sense, just beginning. Miss Ella always was a vital part of her home town. For more than thirty years, she was the organist for the Athens Methodist Church, which her grandfather had started. And, during the same years, Miss Ella taught the Sunday school class named

after her mother, Bettie Lively Holroyd.

Though very much the small town girl, Ella Holroyd became a world traveler and she entertained many groups with her lectures and talks about her travels. In 1955, Ella and her sister, Mrs. Ramona Bresnahan, spent several months on a world tour that found Ella and Ramona entertaining and playing the piano for the passengers wherever they went. The captain of the *President Polk* presented Ella with a silver replica of the ship for playing the organ during the worship services.[20]

Continuing to work with students, Ella Holroyd still was an honored figure at Concord College even when approaching eighty years. In 1964, President Joseph F. Marsh, Jr., awarded Ella Lively Holroyd the degree of Honorary Doctor of Music.[21]

In the citation for the degree, President Marsh expressed his admiration for the tiny professor emeritus known as Miss Ella:

"Ella Lively Holroyd, your entire life has been one of association with, and devoted service to, this community and Concord College. Always anxious to encourage a love of music in your students, one small boy among them, now a college president, progressed from C-D, C-B, up and down; C-D-C-B, all around, to Paderewski's Minuet in G, but his lack of further progress was no fault of yours. Willing to share your talents with others, you faithfully serve your church, your community, and your college with your music, and your lectures on your world travels enrich many lives. On this anniversary of the fiftieth year of your first professional diploma from the Cincinnati Observatory, and the sixtieth year of your graduation from Concord College, it is with a heart full of joy that your beloved Alma Mater is privileged to honor you, our "Miss Ella," by conferring upon you her first degree of Doctor of Music.[22]

About this time, Dr. Holroyd began to write down some of her reminiscences. One story from her notebooks illustrates the love of Ella Holroyd. She called it "The Aigret" after the long white plumes of the egret, which almost became extinct when its feathers became popular on women's hats. Ella wrote that years ago Miss Baur, at the Conservatory, had asked her to take care of the "odd balls," and Flora Briggs was the oddest of them all.

In Ella's estimations, Flora was an undisciplined girl whose father was a mule dealer and whose mother was a professional bridge player. For her high school graduation present, Flora had asked her father for an "Aigret." "He had never seen one in the mule business," wrote Dr. Holroyd, "but she acquired one some way and wore it on her hat day and night. She had her picture taken

with it while she was holding a red rose."[23]

Flora had always eaten in a restaurant with people who had little concern with etiquette, so she was assigned a seat next to Miss Baur to improve her table manners. Flora never did well at the Conservatory because she was so undisciplined that her instructors never gave her anything challenging to do. Moreover, she was hypercritical of almost everything and everbody.[24]

Ella earned money at the Conservatory by running errands for the faculty every afternoon, and she would lie down to rest each day before dinner. Then would come her "treat." Flora Briggs, "a genius with a heavenly touch," would play Puccini, the lovely melodies of "La Boheme," and many other pieces. She knew them all, and her fingers "riffled them off like the music of an angel's harp."[25]

Flora gained no recognition at the Conservatory and was never even permitted a recital for she hated the study of theory and harmony and just wouldn't do the work, but Ella Holroyd appreciated a natural talent and it was this breadth of understanding that made her the great and gentle teacher that she was. Flora later married the conductor of the San Antonio Symphony and played concertos with that orchestra for many years.

In 1969, Concord College dedicated the Okey Logan Alexander Center for the Fine Arts at Concord College, a true melding of the harsh world of coal and the cultural world of the arts. A tiny professor emeritus had brought it together, and she would play the dedication concert.

Okey Logan Alexander attended Concord before the turn of the century, but he and Ella Holroyd had gone their separate ways for almost seventy years. Mr. Alexander started as a salesman for the Pocahontas Fuel Company, moving up eventually to the presidency of that company and the directorship of several others. It was his wish that his great fortune be dedicated to the health, well-being and education in communities lying in the Pocahontas field. In this way, the meeting of coal and the arts came about in Athens, West Virginia.

As Dr. Ella Holroyd walked onto that great stage on October 19, 1969, she must have thought about the converted barracks in which she had taught. The new facility had been built at a cost of 2.8 million dollars, and the building remains as one of the finest centers for the arts to be found in West Virginia. Its students continue to influence music education in southern West Virginia.

The Concord graduate of 1904 appeared to be very small when seated at the grand piano that Sunday afternoon. In the audience

were the Governor of West Virginia, Senator Randolph, members of the Board of Regents and the Board of Education, and other dignitaries from several states.

The *Bluefield Daily Telegraph* of October 21, 1969, printed the following about that performance:

"Another thing about the dedication Sunday of the Alexander Arts Center at Concord College, perhaps one of the most important things, was the stunning personal triumph of a lovely eighty-four-year-old lady, Dr. Ella Lively Holroyd.

Dr. Holroyd brought an audience of several hundred to its feet, some with tears in their eyes, with her hauntingly beautiful rendition of "Widmung" by Schumann-Lizst. The performance would have been a brilliant feat for a pianist of any age, and at eighty-four, it was incredible.

Miss Ella modestly protests that nowadays she doesn't do as well as she used to, and perhaps that is true. But it would be hard to sell that story to the large audience which heard her Sunday, and which was enthralled by her performance. She is a supremely talented lady, and we hope area music lovers will have many more opportunities to hear her in the years to come."

With this personal triumph, Miss Ella might have retired, but she continued with her private studio, coming up to the nation's Bicentennial celebration in 1976. The town that had been started by her grandfather was to dedicate its new waterworks dam during this celebration, and Dr. Ella Lively Holroyd was to be the speaker. She spoke in still clear tones of her ninety-one years in Athens, and it truly was her town. In that year, the Athens Women's Club designated Miss Ella as "citizen of the year."

About this time, John Faulkner wrote in the *Hinton Times*: "Probably the oldest living music teacher in the nation who is still quite active is Dr. Ella Lively Holroyd of nearby Athens. The ninety-one-year-old teacher is alert and bright as a new silver dollar."[26]

Miss Ella was bedfast shortly before her death, but the love and humor still glowed in her piercing blue eyes. Conceding nothing, she bought new clothes and proposed to wear them in bed. To a friend, she said, "That's where I live these days, you know."

Her obituary reads, "Dr. Ella Lively Holroyd of 318 State Street, Athens, died Friday morning in a Princeton hospital after a short illness." The date was April 3, 1981.

Writing in the *Princeton Times*, Leola Johnson wrote: "She exemplified the virtues of a gentlewoman to generations of little boys and girls who grew to adulthood admiring her. Old fashioned

in her sweetness, she was kind, courteous, dignified, and ladylike in a manner which, sadly, is passing."

Miss Ella's portrait, by Betty Ogden, now hangs in the Okey Logan Alexander Fine Arts Center, through the efforts of a former student, Ella Nash Rainey. Ella's portrait joined her father's, commemorating nearly a century of service to the college and serves as an inspiration to future generations at Concord College.

The sounds of the trains still come, the sounds of the mourning still are heard, but one small woman, by a life of service to the arts, has made it a better world.

NOTES

[1]Linda Vest, *Miss Ella Holroyd*, 1975. In the late 1840's, King James of England granted a sizable portion of land in what is now Mercer County to a Mr. Giles, and it became known as the Flat Top Land Company. The Holroyd saga began in 1847 when William Holroyd bought land from Mr. Giles and settled with his young bride Sarah in the Pisgah Valley.

[2]A few years after their arrival, Colonel Henderson French, another land grantee, donated land for a church where Athens now stands. William became the pastor.

[3]*The Pines*, Athens Home Demonstration Club Bulletin, 1963, p. 5.

[4]Kyle McCormick, *The Story of Mercer County* (Charleston, W.Va.: Charleston Printing Co., 1957), p. 3. At this time, there were many political considerations that would affect Mercer County from that time forward. Without exception, the counties of southern West Virginia had been with the Confederate cause and had considered themselves part of Virginia. However, the mountains became a strategic consideration, and it was said that they would be worth 50,000 troops as a defense from any assault through southern West Virginia. This was a telling argument at the time, so Mercer County became a part of West Virginia.

[5]James was born in 1852, and he became the first postmaster of Concord Church. While James was associated with Concord College for all of his life, his two brothers became medical doctors, and the family remains prominent in medicine to this day.

[6]Ella Lively Holroyd, *My Early Education in Athens*, p. 1 in Ella Lively Holroyd Files, Concord College, Athens, W.Va.

[7]The name Athens was chosen in 1896 after the post office noted conflict with another Concord Church.

[8]Holroyd, pp. 1-2. For all her life Ella Holroyd would look at the world throught the eyes of a true humorist. You see it in everything she wrote and in everything she did. After playing the

organ for more than one hundred weddings, Ella remembered the one where the bride didn't want traditional music and chose "Apple Cider," a popular tune of the day, for the wedding march. She remembered the big red apple that Estil Oxley gave her on the first day of school. She noted that she talked too much, so they didn't let her come back. Pearis Oxley, Estil's son, said his father had always remembered Ella as being too small and too young to go to school.

[9]*Ibid.*, p. 3.

[10]*Ibid.*, p. 2.

[11]*Ibid.*, p. 8.

[12]*Ibid.*, p. 10.

[13]*Ibid.*

[14]Personal letter from Clara Baur, 9 May 1906.

[15]Personal letter from R. Garnett Graves, 10 May 1912.

[16]Personal letter from J.L. Atkinson, 13 May 1912.

[17]Lynn Jewel, newspaper clipping, *Bluefield Daily Telegraph*, 25 November 1976, n.p. That problem was not solved for Ella until about 1948 when the music department was moved to a building out in the meadow where they could make all the noise they wanted.

[18]*The Pines*, a history of Concord College, Athens, W.Va., in *The Concordian* Files. Concord College Library, Athens, W.Va.

[19]*The Pine Tree*, Concord College Yearbook, 1951, in *The Concordian* Files.

[20]Vest, p. 9.

[21]President Marsh's father had brought Ella to Concord in 1932. How fitting it was that the younger Marsh presided over the dedication ceremonies.

[22]Joseph F. Marsh, President of Concord College, "All Our Past Acclaims Our Future." Convocation address, Concord College, Athens, W.Va., 1964.

[23]Holroyd, reminiscences, in the Holroyd Files.

[24]*Ibid.* She couldn't, however, take care of her streetcar tickets, so Ella volunteered to do that for her. After Ella's graduation recital, a triumph, Flora had said, "Ella, you almost gave me a thrill with that Chopin 'Nocturne.' " "Bravo," wrote Dr. Holroyd almost seven decades later.

[25]*Ibid.*

[26]John Faulkner, newsclipping, *Hinton Times*, n.d. 1976, n.p.

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Catherine Bliss Enslow

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9 *Catherine Bliss Enslow*
(1899-1973)

Some individuals are exceptional because they combine a talent for efficient work with a talent for cultivating friendships. Others may be versatile and excel in a variety of professional and civic activities. Catherine Bliss Enslow, West Virginia journalist in the field of society, possessed all of the above qualities. Definitely an opportunist, she would " . . . do all things to get a story."[1] She balanced the aggressive side of her personality with a social charm and an eagerness to know people. Her versatility is evidenced in the fact that she not only was the author of of highly popular society columns — the *Huntington Advertiser*'s "Miscellany" being the best known — but also was the star of a number of radio programs for two decades. Furthermore, she was an award-winning leader in civic, political and charitable organizations.

Catherine Bliss Enslow was born February 14, 1899, into one of Huntington's most socially prominent families. She was the youngest of the three daughters of Edward Bliss Enslow and Constance Brockenborough Kelly.

Catherine's paternal grandfather was Andrew Jackson Enslow, who moved to Cabell County in 1870 to assist in laying out the wide streets of the city of Huntington. He became one of Trinity Episcopal Church's three original trustees.[2] He and his wife, Nancy Bliss, had three sons and one daughter, the middle son being Catherine's father.

Edward Bliss Enslow was born in Scioto County, Ohio, in 1859. Noted for his "pleasing personality and honorable methods," he established Huntington's first insurance company in

1882 at the Florentine Hotel.[3] In 1908, he sold the business to accept an executive post with the Columbia Gas and Electric Company . Misfortune came four years later when he died of throat cancer, leaving a debt of $30,000.[4]

Catherine's mother, Constance B. Kelly, was the youngest of three children of David Kelly and Mary Constance Miller of Lewisburg, Greenbrier County. A graduate of Greenbrier Academy for Girls, she married Edward Bliss Enslow in 1890.[5] Catherine enjoyed an especially close relationship with her mother, whom she loved " . . . more than anyone else in this world."[6]

At the time of her father's death, Catherine was a thirteen-year-old seventh grade student at Jones School. In August 1913, she entered the freshman class at Huntington High School. A popular girl, she was well known for skills on the basketball court.[7] Surprisingly, the future journalist was not on the staff of the school newspaper, the *Tatler*. Nevertheless, early evidence of her writing skills was displayed in a freshman English project for which she wrote and designed her own magazine, "The Slipper."[8]

She earned excellent grades in English and music but was merely average in the social sciences and Latin; she felt math was her nemesis. A dependable person, she was never tardy to class and was rarely absent. On the other hand, she did not have exemplary deportment and, as in later life, would not hesitate to assert herself and "speak her mind."[9] Teachers had to remind her to behave.[10] In time, she developed a distinctively "saucy" manner of speaking.[11]

During her freshman year, Catherine and seven school chums formed the T.T. Club with the main purpose being the sponsorship of charity balls. Her early foray into organizing saw the first dance at the Hotel Frederick draw only $50 with the girls having to take up a collection to pay for the expenses. Subsequent Christmas dances were better organized and publicized; the final one, in 1927 at Vanity Fair, netted $2,500 for charity.[12]

Catherine's other youthful escapades included starring in a silent feature film — an "all-Huntington made" picture titled *Blinded Youth*. Also, she was a featured performer in amateur musical reviews. Moreover, when American soldiers were sent to Europe in World War I, she and two society girlfriends offered to go to France to serve as ambulance drivers for the Red Cross. Huntington businessman C. L. Ritter even offered to furnish them with an ambulance for their service if they were successful in enlisting. They were not.[13]

During these years, Catherine was a slender girl (she would become quite hefty in later years). An attractive young lady, she

was 5'5" tall and had brown hair, blue-grey eyes, a pug nose and a multitude of freckles.[14] Her personality, too, was attractive; a friend during her youth described her as " . . . the personification of Huntington's most desirable social life."[15]

She graduated from Huntington High School in May 1917. A vacation in Chicago soon followed, at which time she visited one of her two sisters. On a lighter side, Catherine was known in Huntington's social circles for her terpsichorean technique, and the visit to Chicago allowed her to improve her skills through a professional dance course at the Perrin Studios. In the early 1920s, she was hailed as a "dancer deluxe" and an expert at performing the Charleston.[16]

Despite the family's high social position, her mother's economic situation was poor. Therefore, Catherine began working immediately after the Chicago trip. She never imagined that the summer job that she took as a rookie reporter with the *Huntington Advertiser* in 1917 would become her lifetime vocation. One of her T.T. Club friends, Eloise Campbell, was the fiancee of Walker Long — the son of the *Advertiser*'s publisher, Col. Joseph Harvey Long. Miss Campbell suggested that her friend seek employment on the newspaper staff.[17] Her first "major" assignment was an undertaker's convention.[18]

For unknown reasons, she resigned in 1919 to take a similar position on the reportorial staff of the *Huntington Herald-Dispatch*, a rival paper whose publisher was David Gideon.[19] There, her career steadily rose; assignments included opening up the Catlettsburg-Ashland, Kentucky news territory, heading the rotogravure section, and writing advice to the lovelorn, articles on sports, sermons, and many other subjects.[20] She was promoted to Society Editor in 1921 after the resignation of Virginia Hoff. This was the first of two such positions which Catherine held in two Huntington papers.

The highlight (or "lowlight") of these years was the time the paper was sued for $25,000 because of a story she wrote about a corset saleswoman. The woman had taken orders on the product and collected half-payment before leaving town. After several months, the corsets had not arrived, so Catherine wrote a story about the matter. The problem came when the saleslady was compared to a well-known female impersonator of the day. The lawsuit against the paper was for a record amount of money; thus, Catherine feared that her job was in jeopardy. Fortunately, Mr. Gideon did not fire her, instead he backed her wholeheartedly. The

grievance was settled out of court and the corset company received $200.[11]

While working at the *Herald-Dispatch*, she continued the round of social activities to which she was accustomed. For example, in April 1922 she was a visitor to Washington and Lee University, where she attended the prom and many other dances. She was pictured in the school's annual, *The Calyx*, as one of "the vamps." She seemed to have had several admirers among the gentlemen studying at that institution.[12]

A vacation to Florida in March 1924 resulted in a job offer the following October from the Palm Beach *Life and Daily News* to be its Society Editor. Catherine sadly turned it down because she did not have the round-trip train fare at the time; her mother had to use the money for an emergency.[13]

In April 1925, Catherine resigned her position at the *Herald-Dispatch* "to become connected" as a saleslady for the Real Estate Securities Corporation.[14] The reasons are unclear as to why she had to leave her full-time job in journalism. Perhaps the deepening financial woes of her family demanded that she seek a higher paying job. Her mother was her dependent and her artist sister, Mary Constance, was in debt to their uncle Frank Bliss Enslow's family due to heavy borrowing.[15] Another reason for her resignation may have been that she did not like the prospect of the merger of the Gideon and Long newspapers in 1927 in order to form the Huntington Publishing Company. A 1927 letter from a friend to Catherine stated: " . . . undoubtedly things have been hard for you . . . you doubtless have the newspaper situation sized up exactly right."[16]

It is unclear how long Catherine held the Real Estate Securities job. However, while working that job, she also made occasional contributions to the *Sunday Advertiser* (the Long paper) in 1926.

Her venture into the business world continued from 1928 to 1930 when she was a saleslady for Frigidaire and was so successful that she earned a trip to the company's February 1929 convention in New York City.[17]

But, always a writer, Catherine was going through a lucky spell with contests at this time. She won a number of minor cash prizes in limerick contests and the like, but she "hit the jackpot" in April 1930 when she won a Willis Knight car for writing a clever ending to a motion picture. The contest was sponsored by Huntington's Palace Theater and her old employer, the *Herald-Dispatch*. (An interesting side note is that second prize, a radio, was won by a Huntington High School senior who would later win

a Pulitzer Prize in journalism — Jack Maurice.)[28]

The contest may have aided in her return to the newspaper business. The earliest indication of this is an October 31, 1930, movie review in the *Advertiser* (the evening paper) with her "by-line." That newspaper would be her employer for the rest of her life.

While Catherine would have been ideal as Society Editor, this post belonged to Maude Mitchell Dudley. Nevertheless, Miss Enslow's jobs included a number of assignments in the society field in addition to Church Editorship, sports writing, and criticism of the arts. An example of the latter was her review of the 1937 concert of the celebrated coloratura soprano Amelita Galli-Curci, whose appearance in Huntington marked her comeback after a throat operation. Catherine's article was so good that Columbia Artists offered her a job writing advance publicity for celebrities.[29]

On February 2, 1941, Catherine became Society Editor of the *Advertiser* after the retirement of Mrs. Dudley, who had served for thirty-five years in that capacity. Miss Enslow's highly popular name-dropping column, "Miscellany," evolved from a similar untitled column that she wrote in 1941 and 1942. The first "Miscellany" was published November 10, 1942, and the initial item was about a local girl who was attending Smith College. For the first ten years, the column usually appeared only on Fridays. After 1951, it was increased to two or three days each week. The column was subtitled "Talk of the Town" in 1953.

By perusing her columns one learns the social history of Huntington. The activities of such socially prominent citizens as Mr. and Mrs. Richard Van Zandt, Mr. and Mrs. Rolla Campbell, Mr. and Mrs. L. Otho Reese, and debutantes like Miss Berridge Long were chronicled in "Miscellany." Ball gowns and party decorations were described in minute detail. All Huntingtonians — not just "the elite" — read that column. Persons recall with admiration the depth of her knowledge of local history and individuals. She was often consulted by other departments of the newspapers whenever they needed to know "something-about-someone" or "who-was-related-to-whom."[30]

Catherine also wrote about the celebrities who visited the city. She used to pride herself on the many interviews that she conducted with the greats and near-greats: people such as Jack Dempsey, Harry Truman, Eleanor Roosevelt, Amelia Earhart, Edna St. Vincent Millay, John F. Kennedy, Amos and Andy, and countless others. If the stars did not go to Catherine, then she sought them out. An example of this occurred in 1951 during one of her many

visits to the Greenbrier Hotel when she was hoping to meet the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. She spent a weekend hanging around them " . . . like Grant hung around Richmond . . . " Her dream came true on Sunday afternoon when she spotted them on the golf course, interrupted their game, and had a very congenial chat with them.[31]

During the late 1950s she added the Travel Editorship to her titles. Under this capacity she led tours to Europe every summer from 1957 to 1960, the last one including a transatlantic voyage on the Queen Mary.

Catherine seemed to have loved her work very much. She always arrived at her desk at 7:30 a.m. and worked to meet the 1:30 p.m. deadline for that day's evening paper. She also thought that it was "fun" whenever she had to work at night.[32] "Stick-to-it-iveness is my slogan," she wrote.[33] Her advice to aspiring journalists included, "Don't be bigheaded; don't show favoritism; be nice to everyone; and be glad to take advice."[34]

Her general appearance at work was very deceptive, for she did not fit the mold of a Society Editor. Colleagues remember her long cigarette holder and the way she chain smoked.[35] Her desk would be littered with two or three smoking cigarettes at the same time.[36] She was quite overweight, a bit slovenly in her dress, and her vocabulary was not very genteel.[37] She carried two paper shopping bags full of supplies, dumped the materials onto her desk every morning, and then swept everything back into the bags at night.[38] Bill Belanger recalls that the top of her desk " . . . looked like the day after the flood water receded leaving the indescribables . . ."[39] Moreover, whenever she had to go on an assignment, she walked into the place and took charge of the situation. She was not above shoving the Governor of West Virginia and telling him where to stand for a good camera angle.[40]

Despite her many idiosyncracies, though, Catherine Bliss Enslow was very much loved and respected by most people who knew her. " 'Society' was her fourth name. When you made Catherine's column you were 'it' . . . no one could compete with her," recalls Jack Hardin.[41] Her friend Ruth Cammack Campbell wrote about the "wonderful way" that Catherine had with people, her unselfishness and her "great" sense of humor. She especially admired the kindness that she had with members of her family, notably the relationship with her mother. Mrs. Campbell concluded, "Frankly — I'm proud to know [her]."[42]

Few persons now remember that Catherine had a second career for twenty years. Begining in 1927, she was a radio singer

and commentator for Col. Long's WSAZ station. Catherine was featured in a singing show in which she performed numbers requested by the audience.[43] Usually accompanied by Betty Cubbedge on the piano, she often liked to play her ukelele. Miss Enslow's deep husky voice could not have been totally unpleasant, for she received a steady flow of fan mail.

The first weekly show was followed in 1931 by a twice-weekly program and, in 1932, the nightly "Westinghouse Girl" show; both were musical programs. After 1932 she had only talk shows, the most successful being "The Talkie Tattler: Hollywood Chatter" (1933-1942) in which she reviewed movies and gave entertainment news. Several others followed, the last probably being 1947's "For the Women" which offered news from the world of fashions.

More importantly, this lady of "society", with its frills, was also very active in a variety of civic, political and charitable organizations during her professional years. Her memberships included the First Presbyterian Church, Alpha Chi Omega sorority, the Altrusa Club and the Junior Department of the Woman's Club of Huntington (these last two being charter memberships).

She served on the Cabell County Democratic Executive Committee between 1932 and 1939. In 1940, she was elected a delegate to the National Democratic Convention in Chicago; she repeated the accomplishment in 1952. The year 1948 saw her election to the West Virginia Executive Committee of the Democratic Party.

In 1938 Catherine accepted an appointment as Cabell County chairman of the "Fight Infantile Paralysis" campaign. The $800 she raised helped contribute to the hospital costs of area patients, to buy food for their families and to purchase an underwater therapy tank for St. Marys Hospital.[44]

Additionally, during World War II, Catherine served as chairman of the 1,700 member local unit of the American Woman's Voluntary services, which performed a number of war-related activities. These included offering classes in switchboard operation and code decipherment, conducting air raid tests, greeting the soldiers who passed by at the C & O Station, sponsoring dances for those who were stationed in Huntington, purchasing crates of cigarettes to send to the troops in Europe and Asia, and donating gifts to the wounded soldiers at Ashford Hospital (the converted Greenbrier Hotel).[45]

But, ever interested in social affairs at the opposite end of the spectrum, Miss Enslow's many other activities included judging and promoting beauty pageants and serving as West Virginia's sponsor to *The Debutante Register*. She was also the social

secretary of Huntington's Debutante Club.

Failing health, which included an eye operation in 1965 and the development of an ulcer the following year, brought about her retirement in December 1966. Nevertheless, she continued to write the "Miscellany" column twice a week, sometimes phoning it in if she was too sick to go to the office.

Her mother having died in 1955, she now shared her apartment with her widowed sister Alice. Foremost on her mind during her later years was the writing of an autobiography to be titled *People Who Have Met Me*, a title underscoring her wit.[46] She made many notations but did not have the chance to write it, for stomach cancer was diagnosed in the early 1970s.

During her retirement years she won many awards including memberships in Personalities of the South, Civic Leaders of America and Two-Thousand Women of Achievement.[47] There was even an African violet named "Miss Bliss" in her honor.[48]

She died February 13, 1973, one day before her seventy-fourth birthday.

Catherine was once asked to comment on the coincidence of her birthday and Valentine's day, reportedly saying, "I was born to love and be loved."[49] In light of the respect and admiration she gained for her accomplishments within the confines of her very traditional female worlds of journalism and civic leadership, one must arrive at the conclusion that there was more than a grain of truth in her statement.

NOTES

[1]Descriptions of self, MS 2/Box 19-Folder 6, Catherine Bliss Enslow Papers, Marshall University, James E. Morrow Library, Huntington, W.Va.

[2]Bob Withers, "The Grand Old Dame of Journalism," *The Tenth Street Journal*, n.d., Catherine Bliss Enslow File, Huntington Publishing Company (HUPCO) Library, Huntington, W.Va.

[3]Newspaper "copy sheet," 1897, MS 2/Box 10-Folder 3, Enslow Papers.

[4]Statement of indebtedness from F. B. Enslow to Mrs. E. B. Enslow, 29 April 1912, MS 2/Box 21-Folder 13.

[5]Kelly Family Bible, MS 2A/Box 11, Enslow Papers.

[6]Personal note, 1922, MS 2/Box 20-Folder 1, Enslow Papers.

[7]MS 2/Box 18-Folder 2, Enslow Papers.

[8]"The Slipper," MS 2/Box 27-Folder 6, Enslow Papers.

[9]Report Card, MS 2/Box 19-Folder 4, Enslow Papers; and Box 19-Folder 6, Enslow Papers.

[10]"The Slipper," MS 2/Box 27-Folder 6, Enslow Papers.

[11]Sgt. Villy Estler to Catherine Bliss Enslow, 12 December 1942, MS 2A/Box 1-Folder 6, Enslow Papers.

[12]Doris Deering, *Huntington Herald-Dispatch*, December 1928, MS 2/Box 2-Folder 1, Enslow Papers.

[13]News clipping, "Huntington Society Girls Could Try to Enlist . . .," December 1917, MS 2/Box 18-Folder 2, Enslow Papers.

[14]Passport, 20 June 1957, MS 2/Box 19-Folder 1, Enslow Papers.

[15]Eustace Chilton to Catherine Bliss Enslow, 24 March 1926, MS 2/Box 2-Folder 5, Enslow Papers.

[16]News clipping, "C. G.s to Give Charity Dance," n.d., MS 2/Box 18-Folder 1, Enslow Papers.

[17]Personal interview with Maurice Kaplan, Huntington Publishing Company, Huntington, W.Va., 8 April 1982.

[18]Scribbled reminiscences by Catherine Bliss Enslow, n.d., MS 2/Box 19-Folder 6, Enslow Papers.

[19]Letter of introduction by Roy Brammer, 2 April 1925, MS 2A/Box 1-Folder 4, Enslow Papers; and news clipping, 1925, MS 2/Box 18-Folder 2, Enslow Papers.

[20]Scribbled reminiscences by Catherine Bliss Enslow, n.d. MS 2/Box 19-Folder 6, Enslow Papers.

[21]Withers article, Enslow File, HUPCO Library.

[22]Telegrams, Lewis Musgrove to Catherine Bliss Enslow, 1922, MS 2/Box 3-Folder 2, Enslow Papers.

[23]Catherine Bliss Enslow to Ruby Edna Pierce, 1 November 1924, MS 2/Box 1-Folder 1, Enslow Papers.

[24]News clipping, *Herald-Dispatch*, 1925, MS 2/Box18-Folder 2, Enslow Papers.

[25]Fitzpatrick Law Office to Catherine Bliss Enslow, 2 July 1924, MS 2/Box 2-Folder 5, Enslow Papers.

[26]Lawrence C. Vittem to Catherine Bliss Enslow, 3 June 1927, MS 2A/Box 1-Folder 4, Enslow Papers.

[27]News clipping, *Herald-Dispatch*, 19 February 1929, MS 2/Box 17-Folder 4, Enslow Papers.

[28]News clipping, *Herald-Dispatch*, 29 April 1930, MS 2/Box 18-Folder 7, Enslow Papers.

[29]Scribbled reminiscences by Catherine Bliss Enslow, MS 2/Box 19-Folder 6, Enslow Papers.

[30]Bill Belanger recollections, Enslow File, HUPCO Library;

and Hardin interview.

[31]Catherine Bliss Enslow, "Miscellany," *Huntington Advertiser*, 11 May 1951, p. 14, Enslow Papers.

[32]Scribbled reminiscences by Catherine Bliss Enslow, MS 2/Box 19-Folder 6, Enslow Papers.

[33]Catherine Bliss Enslow to Ruby Edna Pierce, 6 November 1924, MS 2/Box 1-Folder 1, Enslow Papers.

[34]Scribbled reminiscences by Catherine Bliss Enslow, MS 2/Box 19-Folder 6, Enslow Papers.

[35]Ernie Salvatore recollections, Enslow File, HUPCO Library.

[36]Kaplan interview.

[37]Personal interview with Jack Hardin, Huntington Publishing Company, Huntington, W.Va., 8 April 1982.

[38]Don Hatfield recollections, Enslow File, HUPCO Library.

[39]Bill Belanger recollections, Enslow File, HUPCO Library.

[40]Kaplan interview.

[41]Hardin interview.

[42]Ruth C. Campbell to Catherine Bliss Enslow, 15 April 1955, MS 2/Box 2-Folder 3, Enslow Papers.

[43]News clipping, 1927, MS 2/Box 2-Folder 3, Enslow Papers.

[44]Notes for a radio speech, MS 2/Box 16-Folder 2, Enslow Papers.

[45]Typed recollections on AWVS by Catherine Bliss Enslow, MS 2/Box 10-Folder 4, Enslow Papers.

[46]Bill Belanger recollections, Enslow File, HUPCO Library.

[47]Certificates, MS 2/Box 19-Folder 4, Enslow Papers.

[48]News clipping, n.d., MS 2A/Box 9-Folder 8, Enslow Papers.

[49]Handmade card, n.d., MS 2/Box 7-Folder 1, Enslow Papers.

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